

Halo Mass Effect: Unto the Dawn

by Evident Disaster

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Summary: The human covenant war has ended, but even in the end of the war, the storm continues to rage. Another war has come, and the UCAF faces a new threat. The chronicles of Shepard as he and members of his force escape into Council Space, war expands into the galaxy. The Adjutant begins its first move, the troops gear up and prepare for battle on Oma Ker, Shepard's first command. CH4

1. Chapter 1

Halo ME: Unto the Dawn

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CH1: Of Soldiers and Men

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AN: This fic was produced early 2011 at the start of the UCAF idea I had and the subsequent creation of Halo AU, of course back then I didn't know crap about development, and tried basing it off people I knew. You'll recognise some old friends. This story was based sort of differently.

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Location: Tyr's Arm- Verne Straits- Orvis

Population: 233,453

Orvis the small colony about the size of 2 earths and had a lot more plant life plains and other crap, what could be said of this world specifically? Well firstly it's dead, as in there's nothing to do here, for the 23,000 personnel who are stationed here especially for training there's nothing, we're here to get trained and shipped off to the nearest battlefield.

Well that was the initial purpose of the outpost, here we trained in various bio-spheres from the aquatic depths of the oceans of this calm little world, to the freezing tundra's of the northern and southern continents there was plenty of things to train for, but sadly boredom was not on that list. So even when we get sent on patrols and training runs, you could imagine we weren't really 'excited' by anything that we did during those training missions, for the most part we sat on our asses and read holo novels and watched porn, drank soda and well 'the good shit' we snuck in or made around the colony.

In truth it was a boring thing to be doing, being stuck in the far rear of the UCAF, at the literal butt end of human territory; here we did what we did. And why you ask we weren't deployed? Well that might be because Orvis is a training world for young troopers and reformed troopers, when I say reformed I mean those who had their minds chewed the crap out by what their experience was like on the battlefield.

PTSD troopers were sent here to recover, well get retrained and pass training on to other troopers; it was a sad sight for anyone who came here on their first day, you'd see a bunch of scraggy marines welcoming you with nurses by their sides along with MPs and doctors. War was hell, but many of us accepted that there technically was no hell, just a shit hole you had to dig your way into and back out of.

As for me, I am the not so narcissistic jackass of my force, but many wouldn't call me reliable either, I tentatively screw up when it comes to delivering; you can ask my 2 ex-girlfriends about that. Among many troopers here I'm one of the few troopers who don't act too happy or too dull, or sombre, or bored, I'm just trying to survive.

I'm Corporal Daniel Shepard, 778th UCAF Marines, and I am at the butt end of the whole fucking army for accidentally screwing up on my colony and getting caught, let's just say mag-rails aren't so trusty after all. After tagging my local admin's car and getting chased by a dozen enforcers and an angry pair of parents, they locked me down and sent me here to become a more 'productive' member of society.

For productive I mean they wanted me to go fight in the war and try to prove to them I was able to do anything aside from causing mayhem wherever I went. But then again causing mayhem was what the UCAF marines did so I guess that was a sort of win for me, until I learnt how dull rear line service was.

But at least I was alive, and not on the front when the covenant launched their attack or else I might have been laying in some field like a lot of them other poor bastards who were sent and brutally ripped to shreds by elites. I saw the statistics and reports from HIGH COM, a ton of personnel getting killed in short order a lot of them no older than me.

Well enough about me, it's time to get back to the point at hand. The outpost is one of the few locations in the UCAF that is made specifically for a few reasons, training and recovery, and testing. Special weapons development and technologies are developed on the colony because no one else lives here except some tens of thousands

of UCAF personnel so it's pretty safe.

However the issue isn't the natural predators or the environment here at the outpost, it's the people that are stationed here that's the majority of injuries here. And also the reason why I found myself in constant pain, and psycho-therapy, in all honesty people find themselves doing things when they're bored, but never mind the odd amount of pain, there was a lot of things to do.

Here's how it startsâ€¦

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Orvis- Sector 7 Field Base: Riley

08:34 AM [UCAF Standard Time]

The sounds of the morning were always punctuated with the ever present members of the UCAF marines in the form of chaos. Likeâ€¦

>'CRASH' "Eric you little mother fuc-." 'MORE CRASHES'<p>

The dull hallways of grey gunmetal steel and titanium were always dull except when it came to the mornings, everyone knew what the mornings were like, which explained the absence of other marines and officers who were supposed to be in the corridors and hallways, aside from the daily morning runners.

Eric slid on the smooth metal plating at high speeds his combat boots squeaking on the metal floor as he moved, he bolted down the first corridor that he could see and was getting ahead of his pursuer who happened to be rather pissed at him. "Get back here you little fuck!" The angry tone of the other marine yelled.

Eric was ahead by a mile as Lazzo came running down the hallway after him, David Lazoroski, bolted down the corridor right after Eric, and there began the first morning run of the day as usual, David was a tall 6'1 shock trooper from the UCAF reserves who had been stationed here for vagrancy. He was a damn good shot and his psych profile had been clean for 5 years straight he was the perfect man to go into the field and comeback completely messed up.

As for the guy he was pursuing, that would be Eric Tori, a stout 5'7 marine who was sent here because he was just under the height requirement to go into the field and maybe because of his record of pranking people. From what his records indicated, he pranked a major at his previous base, and resulted in a field accident which got him nearly court martialled.

That led him being dumped here at the outpost, but he was merely the tip of the ice, there were plenty of guys here who came from major cities and lower class families, well in terms of lower class they lived off of the system, and made a living there. These guys they were like me no home and no place to go but the government program to get better lives.

Well in saying 'better' I mean getting off the streets, which was somewhat better, the schools we get sent to were public government controlled institutions, and then came the option, the day you got to choose where you'd like to go. One you had the option of non-military

work, which was everything else category. And then there was the military category which was a lot different, the UCAF allowed for 13yr olds to join and train for 3-5 years of their lives in military uniform.

Best part about the program was being able to choose what jobs you wanted in the future you aim for while in the military and being given a lot of benefits, but those benefits came with a lot of strings attached. Firstly being in the youth academy meant you could be called up to serve at a moment's notice if your colony falls under attack.

Secondly as soon as you reach 14 and 9 months you're legally able to be deployed wherever they want to send you, but you at least get prior military training in the sense you know what you have to do, and put you in an intense simulator which gives you firsthand experience of what you'd face. Sure brutalising children seems barbaric, but there was a good reason, the covenant weren't ones for mercy especially when massacring children.

Then there was the final cherry on top, you have no choice if you get called up, they could deploy you wherever you'd be required, but there was a benefit to this. You could get armour tanks and a lot of ammo to boot, and if you signed your life over to become an ADST you got a pair of wings to signify you were going to die very quickly.

But there were plenty of benefits to becoming a UCAF marine; the health benefits cover everything literally. From your toes to your dick you had medical coverage, you lose an eye they give you a new one, or they replace it with cybernetics, you lose an arm they can clone a new one in or replace it with cybernetics, if you lose your genitals, well you get the picture.

But that didn't mean you'd get everything so easy, training was brutal, hard diets and punishment for any failures during training, with a whip involved and it's not kinky, nerve burns hurt more than you can imagine. A whole team had to function as a team; there were trust bonds that had to be forged in order to work as a team.

There was a lot involved, especially if you were a helldiver, the ultra-lethal weapons of war, made to hunt and kill everything that got in their way, and they had little to no mercy in their eyes. Those guys were probably the single most frightening thing to meet on the battlefield, if you were the enemy. Helldivers are armed with the UCAFs greatest array of weapons to deal with anything and everything that go in their way.

Of course I becoming a helldiver was a long shot, those psycho's are elite to the core. No one knows how many are trained, but it's suggested they might have been kids themselves, taken from massacred colonies and turned into psycho's to take vengeance on their family's murders. Of course the war ending has made them sort of aggro.

Well at least I didn't have many of them to worry about, majority of those guys are just here for R&R from the front line to stop them from going on a rampage and killing the covenant POWs and allies that were passing through the area. For me staying a marine seemed the most likely outcome, another 3 more months and I get a discharge back to my colony.

The war ending has put the UCAF surplus military force to withdraw, meaning every marine recruited in the past year or 2 was now being released from service, I was happy sure, but the problem was that there were a few hundred million of them so it would take time before they received discharges for me.

But back to the morning run, Eric slid his way past the various waking personnel heading down to his little safe house separated from the base to stow himself away and then wait out David; of course Lazzo knew this as well. He bolted after the guy like an elite itself was on his heels, he and Eric rushed down to the next level.

He never took the lift and went straight for the stair case; he swung himself through the door and grabbed the railing before swinging himself across the flights of stairs like a boss. Eric was a fairly agile person being part of a parkour gang, teens who go running about causing mayhem doing potentially lethal stunts. Eric speedily hopped down the stairs until he reached the last level doing a backflip out the door before David who took the lift arrived.

David was still a fairly fast guy as well, being an athlete before he volunteered for the UCAF; he got to chasing Eric down the hall. The two of them cause more havoc than about a dozen grunts with fuel rod guns. They pushed their way through the corridors knocking down personnel left and right and starting a chain of daily problems. (Just as plannedâ€¦)

Eric managed to bolt down the hallway past administration department, sure there was always the risk of running into 'her' but better to cut across to lose David rather than get possibly cornered. Of course Eric had a 1 in 5 chance of running into command admin, and sadly that was today. He got as far as the intersection and turn when he was slammed across the face by a folder.

Eric did a backflip as he landed on his back, as he attempted to get back up he was suddenly stepped on by a heeled shoe.
>"Going somewhere private?" A feminine yet very stern voice asked.<p>

"Lieutenant Adder I-." Eric didn't manage to get another word out before she pressed on his chest again and interjected.
>"I don't want to hear another excuse private, you've got rounds to complete and I'm sure Sargent Lazoroski would be happy to get you to do them, however I have no patience for either of you. But don't try my patience by running by my office in the morning, and do not knock over command staff or it won't be just your chest hurting." She punctuated by pressing the heel into his abdomen.<p>

"RIGHT." He managed to groan out painfully.

She lifted her heel and turned to face the sergeant. David saluted even though he was a mess; even he didn't dare disrespect the lieutenant, she waved him off.
>"Get back to your bunk and change Sargent you look like shit."<p>

"Yes ma'am." He replied and then threw a quick glance at Eric before he stormed off.

Eric's luck had saved his arse if only for a minute.

>"Oh before you get going Eric could you get Major Mitchel? I need him to report for a command briefing in an hour at Block 15, the UCAF command had sent new orders regarding the outpost, and he's been included in the briefing." She explained.<p>

He nodded in pain and then limped off still grasping his chest as he headed to the vent intersection, he'd be able to reach the major through the vents rather than the damned corridor, walking was overrated to him. He crawled back into the vents and headed to the surrounding barracks, specifically B-42.

Eric slid down from the ceiling vent in the corridor of the barracks and then knocked on the major's door.

>"Hey Major, the lieutenant wants you down stairs in an hour." He shouted as he tapped on the door.<p>

The Major, Mitchel Harris, UCAF 188th Marines, he was retired after his unit was decimated, losing almost all of their numbers in their engagement with the covenant during the Daedalus campaigns, he was retired by HIGH COM and called into recovering service here. He wasn't psychologically stable for command, was the official report, but it was more like. 'Keep him from public eye about the giant fuck up we made during the warâ€|'

Harris has since been stuck at the outpost as more a weary officer in charge of keeping the troops in line and getting us prepared to move out when we needed to, which is all nice and shit if it weren't for the fact that he tells us the reality of what the war was like for him, which has pretty much given us a clear detail as to why his force was utterly wiped out, of course it could be worse.

We simply accepted that we weren't going to survive long if we ever ended up on the front line, as for the training we got here. Well I'll give you an example, we have a team of engineers from the technical force, and you'd think they'd drive in a tank or something, but no they drive around in ATVs, a 4 seater ATV which goes around blasting missiles at everything.

So as you can tell, this is a fairly functional military force we have here at base. And none of us have managed to get tried by actual war, if you could tell how we were, then it was pretty obvious war wasn't the thing we were good and blowing shit up and causing all sorts of mayhem yes. Functioning as a proper military force, maybe not, that was purely something that wasn't defined in our force.

But nonetheless Harris knew how to get us to work as a proper military force. He opened the door and answered.

>"What is it private?" He groaned as he asked.<p>

"Sir, the lieutenant wants you to get armed and dressed now; she needs you to get to a briefing with the rest of command staff." Eric replied.

He shook his head and sighed.

>"I'll be there in half an hour, let me get my clothes on and a bit of breakfast before then." He replied closing the door behind him.<p>

Eric paused and shrugged as he turned away back into his vent in the

ceiling and closed it behind him.

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30 minutes later

Harris found himself in the midst of the higher command staff of the base; purely here for the info and a cup of free coffee, he always did this during meetings. He sat across from the command staff members who were in the inner circle discussing their circumstance with all branches of the UCAF base.

I hadn't been here and well I never will, but Harris usually informs us about how meetings tend to go, and such. Of course we only listen if we ever bother, and well I think I'll have to change to third person here, in all honesty I can't give a fuck about using my own experiences. I can barely pay attention to my teacher when she addresses us about how to dissect Licus worms than recall every event that happens in a 10 year span.

Harris's attention was finally brought to a ONI spook, or spooks, there were 5 members of the base's ONI division here, which was a very rare occurrence because the ONI operated outside UCAF jurisdiction as well as command, it was damn rare to see even one of their higher ups appear before a meeting.

Harris played his usual air of laziness and sat back, he wasn't one to be suspected for being cautious, much of the staff had lost interest in pursuing his past, aside from Lt Adder. Cloe though didn't have to ask she was given full access to UCAF command archives as the Operator for most of the local senior troop units.

Harris did know what she knew about him, but never bothered to pursue any conversation with the woman, he wanted to remain as far from getting close to people as he could. Sitting there he just listened in for what this meeting was about. Colonel Ian appeared, Ivan was a senior from the UCAFs 5th year into the war with the covenant, he fought from Krugis to Balantare, and man was a great leader and strategist who sadly retired because of his years spent on the field.

Lost his wife and 2 children during a surprise attack on his colony and most of his family, the man was alone now, in his 50s wondering if he'd be able to restart his life. But at the moment he remained commander of the outpost, most likely out of respect for the men and women he commanded over as well as familiarity.

Ian began.

>"I'll make this clear, and I won't say it again, people, we are in the shit." He stated fairly aptly.<p>

They all looked at him quite seriously, Harris threw a look at the colonel before he continued drinking his iced mocha, and the colonel brought up a display and let the holographic images form a full map of what was happening.

>"Nearly 3 days ago, the ONI had received an emergency distress beacon from one of their vessels on the edge of UCAF space, it was out there for research and exploration, along their way they uncovered a suspected Alpha class artefact." The room was filled with uncertain murmurs; they all knew what artefacts they found in the

past ones like the Apex and the Halo's and the Ark, all of the things that nearly wiped out life. "What was discovered was not of Forerunner origins though, but whatever it was, had enough power to sling a ship half way across the galaxy pretty easy if the ONI reports been accurate before the loss of the research team."<p>

He was tapped on the shoulder by a colonel of the ONI. He turned back and introduced rather hesitantly the ONI officer.

>"I give the floor to Colonel Merrick, ONI's informant here and rep."<p>

Merrick stood with a calm and yet dangerous air around him, even though being rather young looking as well as being 5'6 feet tall. Merrick stated out clear and loud.

>"We have 3 days or even less before we find ourselves besieged, the encounter at the artefact was an unfortunate one which has brought the attention of the UCAF and ONI as a whole to bring all immediate forces to the outpost as soon as possible. Why we are doing this is because we are now on alert level 2, high risk incursion from hostile force."<p>

"High risk of incursion? Don't you mean invasion?" One officer interjected.

"Call it whatever you like, the situation remains the same, the force we encountered at the artefact has put command on alert, high alert, with plenty of open space between here and the nearest reinforcements we are on our own for approximately 4 days from the nearest UCAF reinforcements of any kind." The colonel replied.

"Well then what about nearby support forces?" Another officer asked.

"None, those colonies haven't been noticed or discovered, and command wants to keep them that way, firstly we don't know the capability of our enemies and surely we have enough troops here at base to hold back any attempts of an invasion till reinforcements can arrive." Merrick explained.

"So we're on the literally shit end of the stick waiting for someone to save our asses? Wow that sounds a lot better than being told we're fucking cut off from any support." A bitter sounding lieutenant exclaimed.

"Stow it, the situation at hand is worsening by the minute and we have 32,895 people here, mainly youth shock troopers not to mention the colonists themselves, we prioritize personnel, as per the Eastern Contingency Protocol. All primary personnel are to be armed and prepared for imminent incursion, and any green horns from 14 and below are to get to safe houses located away from the base until UCAF reinforcements arrive." Colonel Ian stated clearly.

"We are all being mobilised as of 2000 tonight, no delays, we are to have all non-active personnel to be evacuated and all primary defence posts manned and armed, shield barriers and defensive walls are to be charged and prepared by tomorrow morning, that is all." Merrick dully finished.

The stink of the ONI's involvement in this was apparent. But they couldn't argue the UCAF had given ONI influence here for the defence

of the small outpost then so be it. They began over tactical deployments over the base where to send commanders and where to send all younger officers where they'd emplace deployable and mobile turrets.

Major Harris paid attention, he acted as if he was just sitting on his arse doing the usual crap, but he knew what was going on fairly well, especially in terms of where his unit would be deployed.

>"Major, I know it's been a while but we think it might be best if we send another officer to have command over your troops-." A lieutenant suggested.<p>

Harris knew where this was going and replied courteously.

>"No thanks, my boys and I have known each other better than most other officers here at the base, I don't give a damn if you've got General Prague, and I'm leading my men into this shithole regardless of what officer you want." He stated nonchalantly as he finished his coffee.<p>

The other officers threw him a disapproving look and the officer who suggested it threw him a rather dirty one as well. But they knew they couldn't take his force off of his hands if they had no grounds to, Harris hadn't disproven he was a bad officer, especially in battle and surely when executing his tactics and plans he's always somehow managed to stay above.

"Very well, but you're taking the training grounds near the base, the training ruins will be a perfect place to put a defence against any attack from that area." Colonel Ian stated.

"Ruins are fine with me, my boys trained there for 3 years they know it like the back of their hand. But what about my support?" He asked as he stared into the empty coffee mug.

Ian looked across at commander Lancer, the technical commander was unsure of how to reply but managed.

>"You won't have any."<p>

Harris stopped looking at his empty mug and placed it next to him and leaned forwards to ask.

>"Are you telling me, I have no technical armour, or light armour?" He said in bemusement.<p>

"Yes." Lancer replied rather uneasily.

"Fucking hell." Harris muttered as he sat back.

"We don't have much of a choice in this matter major, the enemy will be hitting us from possibly all directions, and we can't bring the armour to back you up fast enough if they're pressing into one region more than others." A sergeant major explained.

"I know how the cookie crumbles; I'm just hoping that I'm not on the wrong end of it." Harris replied as he pondered over his now limited area of defence, he was down to warthogs and mongooses which in all honesty were not meant for direct warfare.

The commanders continued discussing the situation while Harris thought about what the hell he was going to do against a possibly

heavily armed enemy.

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Elsewhereâ€|

"Commander Varrick has the relay been secured?" A holographic form of the turian high councillor asked.

"Yes sir, the relay as well as the wreckages have been secured, however all important intelligence and information have been wiped from the records of the 'human' vessels, however we have narrowed down our search to a single system where one human vessel appeared to be jumping to, it is very likely that it may be their homeworld." Commander Varrick replied summarising the situation.

The turian high council member nodded.

>"Good, a race of upstarts we need to show law and order to, show them our way of justice for violating council law, I give you full command of your patrol force and all reinforcements. You are to proceed with pursuit of these humans and contain them on their world."<p>

"Very well high councillor Yurin." Varrick nodded in acknowledgement.

As the hologram disappeared he sat back and shook his head.

>"How long till more reinforcements arrive?" Varrick asked an ensign.<p>

"Another 4 hours, they're just entering the other side of the relay now sir." His ensign replied.

He nodded and looked out the window wincing at the sight before him. A dozen hulls of turian vessels strewn about, this was a complete disaster, their arrival here was an unintended accident, not to mention captain Eurric who commanded the flagship was the first one to go down, the rest of the fleet fired in response when they demanded to board the unknown ships.

They received a wave of fire for approaching and before he knew it they had lost a dozen ships to only 3, the others they sunk were civilian in design, well it was impossible to tell now, and the ships were scuttled with all crew aboard. They were dedicated to what they were doing that was for sure, but it made him even more uneasy about this whole thing.

They were to pursue these humans to their world, and with utmost haste, it made him cautious as to what they were getting themselves in. But he had his orders as much as he didn't like them or had second thoughts about, he had to follow them. His force of 5 remaining vessels and 18 reinforcements meant they were going for an assault on the human world, he just hoped that it was swift or he might be in serious trouble.

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AN: 2012: I just updates from this day due to a lot of errors and addressing a number of lore issues required for explaining about the UCAF, this should clear things up a bit.

AN: 2013: The story was old and I realised I had separate sections, and not to mention there's been a lot of time since I made this.

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UCAF chronological data- ACCESS GRANTED

Date of admission- Published 2221- Updated 2521- Modified 2555

/Memo/ -Dr Valerie E Haley

>To those who read this chronological archive of the UCAF you may require to read the UCAF foundation records and past ICA records in order to understand this, please note that all archives were accessed and modified by me, and any confidential data seen may or may not be factual as there have been continuity issues through the UCAF archives since 2399. All data regarding specific structures and organisations will be recorded in their own separate sections, please also note that this shares archived data on past organisations and records involving the military, economic and historic events and timelines. This information must not be allowed to fall into unwarranted hands due to the sensitivity of the information.<p>

To those who read this, the future is not set, however the past is, heed this warning, and do not make the same mistakesâ€¦

/END/

Index Archives

Factions: Note that some may not exist while others may have disbanded

In the beginning of the new colonies of the Nova Stratus region, there were over 80 known factions in control of the region of space; throughout 2221 the UCAF recorded the 8 main power factions:

Pop: 46 billion, 890 worlds, unknown amount of systems

Imperial Arcadian Empire: The Arcadian Empire was once built over the ruins of a past race that utilised space FTL teleportation; the Arcadians decided to ignore trying to understand the super advanced technology and simply accepted it as a gift from fate. The Empire structured itself on militaristic and imperial beliefs since the early 5th century when the first Arcadians witnessed the first king travel through the gateways with his armies to ascend into godhood. It wasn't until much later that it was discovered to be a teleporter and began to spread news of the new king, and thus over 500 years the Arcadian Empire has stretched far even though not being FTL capable, it encompassed over 172 planets and 5 dozen systems by 2225.

Human Unification Organisation: This faction of power was infamous through the Nova Stratus records as being completely immoral in practices with medicine and genetic manipulation, especially through the early 24th century. The Human Unification was a movement and ideal based on a single mind and body, not literally but metaphorically it meant to bring the human race under one banner and to bring the colonies to improve themselves by adapting their beliefs

of improvement through health and genetics, their beliefs were well met, but not widely accepted. The HUO began expansion just 75 years before 2225, it reached over 93 worlds, but had severe restrictions due to non-FTL abilities, but it could communicate to other planets through a unique technological device found on their planet, this communication allowed access to dozens of worlds, but made things arduous as it took years to convince many, and those with them were not as loyal as they had yet to show themselves until 2225.

Imperial Orussian Imperium: The Imperium of the Celestial Tundra is what Orussia essentially means, the Orussians had been formed during the 8th century and continued to evolve into the state that it is, however it is unique due to its amazing bit of genetic evolution. The Orussian people originate on their world of Icarus, frozen tundra of a planet, but they live in underground super cities constructed millennia before their existence, it was said that their gods shaped and created them to do their will. The Orussian people were initially suspected to have been cloned, on closer inspection that rumour had become somewhat true, in the earliest days the ICA found that the Orussians were using an alien technology that allowed them to be cloned at nearly instant speeds, it aged the clones to a certain degree before releasing them as perfect replicas, however in the years the Orussians phased out the use of clones as there was no longer a need. Orussian space from records indicated that they possessed 123 worlds.

Independent Colonial Coalition: ICC was not only a formidable power during the early colonial era, but the fact that they had the largest coalition of planets was frightening. The ICC had formed during the late 9th century as the planet of Callistan began to advance; the Callistians had unified and advanced rapidly in technology and science putting their beliefs in religion behind for idealised morals and ethics and beliefs which suited their society. The Callistians recruited a number of neighbouring systems through talk and began to advance into modern 21st century technology by early 11th century, they had covered the areas of technology faster than that of earth, however during the period which became known as the 'colonial age' the Coalition fell apart at the seams as many new colonies wished for independence. For 400 years the ICC was engrossed in civil strife and war, and eventually it fell into a dark age of space. ICC did not reform until late 18th century and only during the 19th did it fully recover to begin again with efforts to reconnect with lost ties. The ICC first developed AI in 2101, and created cybernetics in 2021. ICC planets numbered roughly 180 worlds, however many factions that splintered decreased the numbers down to 50.

Neo Koslovic Separatists: NKS was formed about the same time the ICA was formed and was kept marginally controllable, the NKS however had many flaws in ideals and beliefs and most of the reform was half hearted corrections that worked well to suit certain colonies to join, the efforts it took the NKS to form was staggering and highly costly, the NKS did not survive with its neo communist beliefs as it died out in early 2312. Planets under NKS influence were roughly 45.

United Republic of Calisto: URC was amazingly the wealthiest faction out of the Nova Stratus factions and it was the most developed faction surpassing the ICC, but it was not as expansive as the ICC or the IAE, it took the efforts of the Calisto Strata Cluster 400 years to get to a fully developed point and the URC required to buy most of

the FTL technology from the ICC when they encountered each other during the late 18th century. URC was initially 30 systems and 130 worlds but developed heavily into 80 systems and 210 worlds by the end of the 23rd century.

Arian Systems Movement: ASM was notoriously a heavy left hand fascist ruled dictatorship, Arian Molvic was an imperialist ruler who believed heavily in the strength of his people, but also his blood, he was supposed to have died during the 17th century, however with certain technology he had managed to stay alive and active, his rule had been nearly absolute, if it weren't for the many new factions which opposed him during the rise of the 19th century where the ICC and the many rebellion forces began to push forwards with a war on his rule, he was not killed until a single 4 man team infiltrated his palace and managed to slay him in 2332. Number of planets under recorded history is unknown

Independent Colonial Alliance: ICA was the foremost impressive force of Nova Stratus region because of its FTL and colonisation ability, the ICA formed in 2225 with its position on Anomia and 12 new colonies, it began to garner support over the whole region boasting new technologies from an empire far away on a planet called earth, and thus the ICA began integration in a short 25 years. It continued to expand until it was stopped by the ICC and the IAE during the late 23rd century. The ICA formed 80 worlds and moved upwards since.

Races: This must remain absolutely confidential for the security of the human race and beyond it

Fenrisson: An indigenous species connected to the world of Valence, their discovery was not made until the 15th century by ICC colonial explorer ships. The Fenris have no intentions to join the human race as they had lived in isolation for many millennia, the ICC did not attempt to force borders open and simply remained passive. The Fenris race did not join the human race until late 2400s where the planet suffered a disastrous famine caused from heat of the local star, it had a minor solar flare which lasted 3 months and destroyed over 60% of crops and caused heavy instability in the planet's ecosphere.

Timeline: 2250-2350

ICA formation in Nova Stratus was welcomed by many, the formation of the first new faction since the HUO centuries earlier, the ICA formed with the intent to bring a democratic social order and wealth to the worlds of Nova Stratus, its 110 ships and 1.1 million colonists met with the first Anomians who lived on the new capital and integrated the pre-space capable race into its own. The ICAF was later formed in 2263 in order to defend against possible raids from pirates and slavers.

ICC and the ASM began a conflict when the planet of Vekta was invaded by ASM forces, the ICC responded with a massive fleet strike and soon the far western regions of the Nova Stratus region was engrossed in a war of attrition, it would not end until late 2341.

URC and HUO form a pact of trade in order to maximise their economic standing as the ICC colonial conflict progressed, the pact would last until the rise of the Advent order and the Imperial Vindicators of

2371.

IAE makes a calculated move to engage the ICA in the south east regions of the Nova Stratus regions, the factions face off in a heavy warzone and soon finds themselves battling on equal terms. The ICA only has the advantage of space FTL and weaponry while the IAE only possess the ability to utilise ground troops. The first conflict alerts the ICA to its fragile situation and makes the ICA council partake in a future plan to protect its space.

2350-2450

The ICC becomes united as it celebrates the victory over the ASM and the death of Arian and his rule, the support for the ICC rises and changes in power gives way for change to order. The ICC begins the next stage of development as it moves to unify the western regions of Nova Stratus.

2370 marks the beginning of change as the URC encounters a mysterious unexplored region of Nova Stratus, this isolated region reveals 64 worlds under the control of the Imperial Vindicator order which had taken root nearly a millennia before. The IVO was formed by the ruling emperor Kisage Hotari his empire had been formed through the use of alien technology in 1250. The IVO keeps at distance until offers of trade and expansion are revealed, the IVO accepts in late 2371 when the URC offers to show them regions of recently conquered ASM systems.

ICAF begins rapid expansion across all front as helps in reconstituting the many ASM worlds, the expansion of the ICA grants it access to over 61 worlds and 30 systems, it had covered as much ground in technology as the ICC, but still did not possess a formidable military.

IAE began its intervention into the expansion of the ICA and the confrontation of the IVO, this move made the Nova Stratus region breach a tension point as the IVO found the intrusion an act of stupidity and challenged the IAE in 2375.

The First Colonial War-2375-2385

The ten year period saw to the end of minor instability as the IVO began its first major step into Nova Stratus, and its first major stride into forming the UCA, the IVO engaged in the war with no belief over pride or greed, but purely on the basis of honour. The war went through 50 systems and on 60 worlds; it totalled 18 million lives and 360 billion credits worth of reparations from the IAE to the IVO.

The ICA made contact with the IVO in 2378 and joined the war, the IVO granted the ICA access to military power and technology as well as access to the legendary Vindicator Order. It was at the end of the war that the ICA suggested a combined effort to unite the colonies and bring proper order to all factions with their assistance, there would no longer be conflict, maybe minor apprehension to the idea, but it would work well with the IVO.

The IVO joins the ICA and forms the ICAF

Second Colonial War-2415-2445

The remnants of the IAE formed into the Neo Imperial Arcadian Empire, and begin another war, the URC step in to assist as hundreds of URC worlds are annexed and the ICC also join. The war goes for over 20 years and brings into play the advanced technologies of the ICC and the IVO creating the MKI Hayabusa powered armour variant suit. The war rages on until the Orussian military joins from its years of isolation. The war escalates with the defeat of the Arcadian Emperor, Magnus Derion on Theta Arcadia.

2450-2525

The UCA is formed in the aftermath of the SCW2 as the ICA no longer was capable of being independent as it had encompassed over 5 major factions of power and over 1200 planets in 2450, the UCAF begins mass expansion and colonisation up until the covenant war.

However things did not stay normal, in 2455 the UCAF was contacted by the Office of Naval Intelligence of the UNSC and was asked into aiding in possible future plans it required. The UCAF was sceptical in accepting the ONI or the UNSC as it had long since ended its ties with earth. But the role of the ONI seemed too good to ignore, the UCAF accepted the terms and conditions and integrated and formed the ONI on Anomia, Hyperion Point base.

2500

The birth of Valerie Haley and the initiation of Project Delta One-

2520

The preliminary stage of development of the Spartan Alpha project and the final steps of Project Delta One, the initiation of Project Rey and Forge

2525

Completion of all assigned task and programs

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/Memo/ -Aniston Grey- UCAF Rey Project Director

"To those who maybe hearing this message, I warn you about what you will hear and what you will read, this is no story of great honour or faith this was survival, and I'll be damned for those who condemn the actions we took in order to save the human race from extermination at the hands of the covenant we did not sit on our asses and do nothing, we took the war to our enemies, with fire and vigour, we shall ensure that mankind will live to see the future, even if we do not make that journey. I say this now, 'I have become death, the destroyer of worlds'."

Project Rey: The Rey project was by far the most disturbing project ever undertaken, this child known as Rey -0149 was taken as a child and then genetically cloned with a psychic membrane in his frontal lobe, his genetic augmentations were meant to keep his mind in communication with the other Rey clones, however he suffered severe trauma and went into a coma. His body was cryogenically stored and 5

more clones of him were created in order to test the psycho telepathic communications link.

The link was proven to be highly unstable as the many Rey individuals shared memories and emotions, but also their same creator, their mother. Rey then began to show signs of psychosis amongst the young group as their minds drifted into the mind of Rey-0149 and began to relive dead memories; the ONI took action to sever the link and begins a neuro-telepathic connection to a quantum core in order to avoid any future incidents.

The units after the connection began to act normally passive and engrossed in training, their controlled belief was to die serving and then to end up with their creator in the afterlife, or the quantum core in which their fragmented existence is sent to after their initial deaths, however there was a severe down side to this adaptation, the neural link made the effect of one of the units dying and sent a psycho impulse to all other units warning them of their brothers deaths and making them relieve their deaths inside their own minds. The ONI did nothing to subdue the effects and observed intent on figuring out the working mind of the young Rey clones.

The program did not end until 2601 when the Rey units reached 11,000 units; although of the 11,000 barely 1000 survive up till 2605.

Project Alpha: "They show greater promise than that of Orion, and they show much to be offered to save humanity, it is a cruel truism that I must do this in order to save lives by destroying theirs, but it is a necessary evil that is inexcusable and for what may come I shall eventually pay for it, but till then they are my children, my legacy to humanity for better or for worse, the judgement is made by us as humans to decide upon it. I did what I believed was right, even when they suffered; I did it because it was necessary. Mind, body and soul" Valerie Haley 2525- A Choice page223

Project Alpha was named in the alpha stages of the Spartan program; it was formed after the failure of Orion and was then used as a template to test the gene-enhancements for the SPII program, Alpha was made in order to ensure that the SPII did not fail, however there were substantial differences in the two programs, the UCAF had funded enough to have 750 candidates aside from the 75 that the UNSC could only afford, the reason being was due to the sheer amount of resources available by the UCAF and the number of highly related gene-strands of precursor DNA that was in the human race in the Nova Stratus region as many humans had been originally altered by the forerunners.

The UCAF had all candidates tested and evaluated over the period of 6 years had had them all take a 3 step initiative into becoming Spartans, the fact remained that some of the chemicals and procedures were far too deadly to perform all at once and it was advised to the ONI that doing so would kill the subjects faster, the process taken by Valerie Haley proved the best option as the program had plenty of time.

The program proved fruitful if not somewhat gruelling, the program produced 690 available Spartans from the 6 year training program and it was less suspicious as to the SPII program, many children were selected from orphanages and certain locations, there was also the

fact that those children taken from families were either compliant or unaware of the circumstances involved with their children. The Alpha project moved swiftly and deftly through to the final stages without flaw.

And the program reached its intended goal by the end of 2524 to begin the Ascent Program.

Project Ascent: The Ascent was meant as an inspiration to the new generation at the beginning of 2525, the program was to provide the new powered armour of the UCAF to the Spartans, and it was also to provide Project Rey with the advanced combat skeletons which had been in secret development in the Prodigal System from early 2520. The MKIII series armour was an early prototype suit required to be piloted by a single Spartan occupant, it was a streamlined variant that shaped exactly to that of their bodies, the only flaw was that the suits had bulky designs and irregular joints, it was based off of the Powered Armour of the Vindicators Order, but had to be adapted with the EOD from the Union Specialists program in order to compensate for the lack of shielding from possible enemy fire.

The Ascent Project also featured the research of the MVF-01 series suits, the Mobile Versatile Frames were made as an external support force for the Spartans, it possessed the firepower that the Spartans lacked as well as the shielding, but it could not create a body shield only a bubble area of effect shield. The MVF was first seen in use in the Prodigal system in the first month of the war, there were records that indicated further use, and then afterwards the suits became obsolete during the fall of 2535 when the Mobile Suit program took place.

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Pop: 76 billion, 1780 worlds, 1500+ systems

Timeline-2525-2555

2525- January

UCAF troops are moved to the Prodigal and Haven's Gate, suspicion to many beliefs that there would be an expedition into the further reaches of space garner much support and thus masks the hidden agenda of the UCAF HIGH COM in its pursuit of hiding the truth of the situation.

Spartan Alpha is moved to Haven 2 days later and begins the final armament procedure before they reach Seti Etha.

Prodigal final checks completed and all MVFs had been fully prepared, only 1 capable pilot is used in the program and is set out to test in field.

5th of January brings the heralds of unknown contacts in orbit over the Haven System, the UCAF respond by attempting communication, the reply is. "_Your destruction is the will of the gods, and we are their instruments."_ UCAF engages in space combat, the UCAF fleets are heavily armed and manage to fend the covenant off from taking the planet on several occasions; however planet side operations revealed heavy combat and action on the planet.

UCAF marine Mitchel Walker of the Marauders independent division is called in from his previous station in orbit aboard a UCAF cruiser to help in a classified mission.

18th of January the Spartan arrive on Prodigal Eta and encounters the Rey program and Dr Haley, the Dr requires to give all Spartans the armour Ascent units and then asks for assistance in evacuating all Rey units to escape craft in order to continue program, Rey Unit 201 is left behind and ordered to self-destruct once all UCAF ships escape, the unit complies and is killed in action, the first clone casualty of the war.

21st of January, Major Mitchel arrives in the Eastern Verge, he is ordered to aid in the location of a special forerunner beacon and is tasked in retrieving the technology to be sent to ONI Section III, his mission soon spirals out of control as the facility he enters is infested with a hostile parasitic entity known as the flood, his platoon is wiped out shortly and he and 3 others manage to reach the safety of the main complex, however surrounded by the flood and the covenant he soon finds no other option aside from sending the message and ending the facility, he activates a quantum purge inside the station core and sucks the station into oblivion with the flood and the covenant.

Through the rest of the year, the covenant press to engage the UCAF, battles prove to be highly costly on both sides as they are nearly equally matched, the covenant fleet masters agree to bring forth their finest commander, grand fleet overseer Tol'ree Moteree, the devised operation heralds the name of the first exalted crusade.

2526-2531

The UCAF lose over 200 light years and over 400 planets are either destroyed or rendered lifeless, more than 8 billion die within less than 5 years and over 1.9 billion soldiers of the marauders and reserve forces. The UCAF initiate military protocol and command, all military academies were to provide youths with military mandatory classes and training, all colonies were to have an immediate defence force in order to stop any chances of the colony's demise.

The UCAF military standing was at roughly 3 billion, with 175,000 available warships and vessels.

Spartan Beta begins the recruitment of more than 1500 new Spartans and advanced MKIV armour is placed into production.

2531-2540

UCAF casualties mount as the war progresses, the UCAF colonies are cut nearly finely in half at the middle of the Nova Stratus region, 490 light years had been lost, 29 billion had been killed and a million youth a day were being killed to fight the enemy covenant on the front lines. Child soldiers from ages up to 12-17 were being recruited near combat zones and guerrilla fighting becomes fierce in the region of the now known dead zone, the Daedalus Crusades.

2535 sees the change in the war as the MS program takes hold in the western regions and the eastern flanks, the UCAF begin a massive

counter offensive using MS units. The war takes a significant turn, as also the UCAF brings forth the many new Spartan troops, the Beta program brings out over 2000 troops into the war and begins mass escalation in the war.

2539 brings out the covenant's own MS program to bear and the war begins to stagnate once more, the UCAF finds itself at a kill to death ratio of 1:7, the UCAF only suffering 1 for almost every 7 of the covenant's own. The war continues as it had until 2545â€|

2540-2551

UCAF begins the slow build up till operation Overlord to which the UCAF would spearhead a massive attack upon the covenant planetoid to kill and wipe out the hierarchs of Divine Resolve, the Spartans receive further upgrades and new forces appear. Covenant renegades begin to harbour support and the war takes a turn for change.

2545 brings into motion the massive assault, the UCAF bring to bear over 11,000 ships upon one of the 4 command planetoids of the covenant, the mass assault breaks the covenant grasp in a major sector and kills one of the prophets. Another flees into the depths of space and is pursued by the UCAF Spartan team Sigma.

Sigma encounters a forerunner planet in the unknown regions of Nova Stratus; the planet of Reverence's Grace is discovered. UCAF forces engage in battle with the covenant, and also locate the forerunner known as the Inheritor, his revelation of the human race and the forerunners changes the beliefs of the prophet of Amity who seeks to change the covenant, Amity vanishes from the Nova Stratus region and takes with him his most loyal troops in order to reform the covenant.

The prophet of Reverence takes his forces and steals the location to a forerunner ultra-dreadnought and begins to hunt for its location, the UCAF soon follow behind to deal with the rogue covenant leader and the covenant forces soon fall into civil war. All 3 planetoids are isolated however their forces manage to build a heavy resistance to the UCAF approach and the UCAF wait until the end of the hunt for the rogue prophet in order to regroup.

2550 the final battle rages after the discovery of the dreadnought Light of Grace, Himitsuki and his fellow Spartans of the specialist division of Alpha fight the covenant and the flood in the region and successfully eliminates the prophet and destroys the dreadnought in the process, Himitsuki and his forces are reported as MIA.

UCAF forces begin operation Will of Innocence, the UCAF launches a massive counter offensive into the covenant remainders, all 3 planetoids are either destroyed or captured and the loyalists begin mass withdrawals back into covenant space. The UCAF regain the region within 1 year and begins to recolonise and re-secure planets. Total death toll, 36 billion excluding the 26 billion from the UNSC, total military personnel active, 5 billion personnel, 450,000 ships and countless resources

The war ends with the Treaty of Prodigal in 2555/1/5

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AN: 2013

This is negligible sorryâ€|

2. Chapter 2

CH2: You're Welcomeâ€|

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AN: Sorry as I said before I don't often have time for all my work, so I might lag behind with some fics. I'm back now and I really am trying to rush this back to the front.

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Tyr's Arm- Verne Straits- Orvis

Date: 2555/3/1

10:34PM

The whole base had been active for the majority of the preparation; there were tens of thousands of military personnel reinforcing the ground between the main base and the city, the nearby civilian population was being sent off to emergency safe houses far from the soon to be battlefields, Harris and his boys had dug in over at a few high buildings which had been relatively untouched.

The marines in the unit began passing out ammo and guns, Shepard was here in the unit, he decided this wasn't the best time to be talking about the whole situation. Shepard was a well-known figure in the force, being the trouble son of a war hero is pretty big news, he never loved his father very much, in his opinion his father hadn't earned the right to call him his son.

Shepard remained outside his father's control since ending up here, he was just another grunt, being the one member who was directed here by his dad, his father still gave a damn and didn't want him to get killed. Of course Shepard figured that being the guy at the back was probably the easiest thing to do, training wasn't bad, but he didn't miss his family.

It made him wonder what else was coming around the corner; Shepard checked his gear, his usual load out, an AR-45 a semi-automatic .45 calibre assault rifle with optional firing modes, not to mention ammo types. A M6D [IV] a .50 calibre handgun, it wasn't the most elegant, but it was quite reliable and devastating. And finally his last weapon, his CSG-9M, it was a 9mm sub machinegun with a compression function which used a magnetic coil inside the barrel to increase the penetration factor and also the silence factor, the gun had a flash suppressor which also worked as a silencer and a magnetic driver, it was a very neat but expensive weapon.

The specifics of his weapons were vastly more complex than that but it was better not to go into too much detail. Then there were the vast amounts of ammo types, the UCAF had created a massive array of bullets that could be used in all sorts of guns, more common ones

were the High Explosive Armour Piercing ammo, it could be used to punch through covenant armour and also blast away infantry but they were fairly loud. Then there was the shield buster ammo, a ionic tungsten, iron, copper, or steel tipped bullet which could punch through covenant shields and keep elites out of range, though they couldn't punch through Hunter Killers they could drop most elite zealots and specialists.

Those were just a few versions of ammo the UCAF carry with it into battle, and Shepard had about every possible clip he could fit onto his body, of course it weighed a ton but it was worth the weight, the numerous situations the ammo could be used in were plenty and it wasn't that much of an increase in weight. The UCAF granted the troops a compression space ammo pouches or bags, which enabled them to carry heavier and bulkier objects into the field.

Shepard felt the need to keep himself prepared in the event of a drastic change, usually the 'shit' hitting the proverbial fan. He learnt that lesson from Harris who kept telling him always be paranoid as shit when it came to an enemy assault, of course Shepard wasn't like that, but he was the one to take advice.

Now that he and the other members of the 778th were dug in well, Daniel Lazoroski from what he could tell had taken a spot nearest to the turret with his squad and then there was Eric who had found the highest position and hardest to reach and positioned himself there. Then there were the various other members who had found some sort of place to hide in case the hostiles broke through.

Of course it wasn't all hiding; many other members had gathered their things and had buried themselves into places of ambush, or had taken sniper positions from above to ensure that they had the most area to cover. Shepard found their method best, it wasn't like the aliens were going to be able to just run up to them, and they couldn't possibly as stupid as grunts.

As Shepard checked his team com, he looked over what was going on. The colonel had taken his command post over to a training bunker which had cameras over the whole ruin; it'd give them the best tactical advantage to alert each team to what locations. There was also the lieutenant's unit; she had a whole force of hell-jumpers with her, they had been ordered in from the base last month after a series of engagements with covenant shock forces.

The lieutenant had made sure to be an observer; she placed herself roughly at the rear of the base, she of course was stationed here due to the closeness and remoteness from the main complex, she probably figured that the base was the obvious target for whoever was planning to hit the colony, if anywhere was safe, it was likely with the least appealing target and that was the 778th.

Shepard still didn't like how things were going, the whole thing stank of ONI's doing, but he couldn't voice it, and how would he? ONI would blow him off as some hardcore marine who just had more than his fair share of ONI's snooping. Of course it could be worse a lot worse. He left it alone; he turned his attention to more critical matters at hand.

The UCAF base was completely fortified there was little or no means of getting to the base without a fight, the only problem was the base

as heavily defended as it could be, the facility wasn't fully manned, the number of military personnel only numbered some thousands but many were here for medical treatment and others were still in training, Orvis was a remote colony and with a lot of good reasons.

Shepard hated to admit it, but if push came to punch they wouldn't have the punch to return, it was purely up to how long the nearest UCAF support forces would arrive to relieve the colony from being overrun. Shepard weighed his luck in his mind and decided that it wasn't the worst thing that happened to date, but it could turn into one.

At least the 108mm Anti-air Vulcan Interceptors would deal with anything that came down to strafe them, of course that was just wishful thinking, the batteries were loosely scattered over the whole place to make it hard to target them, not to mention the ruins weren't a critical location, it was a training ground.

M325 Defensive Turrets were mainly the defensive support the marines here were going to get, the turrets were .50 calibre chain-guns which were used usually in training exercises, but could be turned into defensive guns in events such as this. As Shepard waited around, he noticed that there was a lack of enthusiasm from the marines, he asked Lazoroski.

>"What's up with the guys?"<p>

"Nothing, they're just quiet, besides most of these kids haven't even seen real action, just a few training simulators, as for me and a few others, we've got our fair share in the intense parts of the training drills so we have a bit more of an advantage." Lazo replied as he checked his AR.

It was then they received the first reports.

>"All units, we counted 18 contacts moving from outside the system, they are assuming an orbit over the colony, it seems like an advanced force, prepare for possible bombardment followed by enemy drop ships. All units hold positions, this is no drill, hostile enemy forces are deploying."<p>

Shepard swore.

>"Well fuck, they sent ahead a scouting force, ain't that niceâ€|"<p>

He made sure to hit the safety on his gun and checked the holo sights, his helmet added to the holo sights like a HUD allowing him to see additional sensors and IFFs, it worked to ensure that there was no confusion of what was going on in the field. He only needed something to shoot, and possibly something to drink.

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It was the first time they saw the human world, it was a world of lush green and deep grey with some blue, it had 2 moons and near a gas giant, there was light space traffic from the planet, a few vessels, it seemed a few had already departed. But still those ships in orbit of the planet waited for them patiently.

Varrick looked at the CIC display of the human forces. He could determine the threat of those few vessels were real threats more than

anything else, the battle at the relay had taught him not to underestimate the effectiveness of the hostile ships, as bulky and ugly they looked, the vessels were still quite dangerous.

Varrick began issuing orders out to his forces.

>"All ships hold formation across from the human vessels. Ensign what does your sensor say about the ground below?" He asked.<p>

The turian ensign checked and replied.

>"There is multitude of settlements, though one large one located near what looks like an orbital elevator."<p>

"Deploy the troops at the capital, we can work our way from there. Send in the gunships alongside our troop's shuttles, standard pattern, surround their capital and then tighten the net around them."

"Yes sir." The ensign replied as he began to relay orders to the troop transports and other vessels.

Varrick believed that this was going to be a very good day for Turians across the galaxy, to hear of their victory over the aggressive humans, they'd build a statue in his honour, assuming he'd win this war quickly and effectively. As waves of vehicles departed from the hangars of the ship, the human vessels closed to meet the turian fleet.

"All ships charge weapons prepare to engage." He ordered.

The turian ships formed around the command vessel and charged weapons, the frigates that they had sped off to engage while the rest of them would use their sheer volume of fire to overcome the human vessels, just like the relay battle. As the frigates engaged the captain watched as the human vessels retaliated, dozens of explosions began to erupt in the void, the clash of lights like miniature suns lighting the night.

The frigates pestered the human vessels for a while, however human vessels were nearly 6-7 times the size of turian ships, the frigates continued until either they were destroyed or crippled, it bought enough time for the other ships to get into range of the human ships and fire. The turian fleet let loose as many shots as they could.

Varrick watched as the human ships absorbed the constant strikes, the mass driver rounds hitting the shields of the ship, he was still amazed at how these humans had evolved, they had energy shielding unlike that of the council. But still it was a small leap; the turian ships could still win this fight.

At least that was what it seemed like, until a blast of light encompassed their view screens, Varrick grasped the side of his command chair as one turian cruiser suddenly exploded; it had been cleanly blown in halves, a nearby destroyer had also been hit losing most of its portside to whatever the humans had just fired.

Varrick turned to his sensor officer who reported.

>"Unknown weapons fire, but if sensors are correct the shot was fired at 50% the speed of light, it had shorn through cruiser 3 and had damaged destroyer 4." The officer informed him.<p>

"Impossible, no ship could manage such recoil. Where did that come from?" He demanded.

"It's located right across the orbit, at 155,000 units, its firing again." He shouted as the next volley came in.

Varrick and most of the crew was tossed to the ground as another shot was fired from the unknown weapon, the shot just missed them, but the sheer gravitational pull of it was enough to pull their ship along. Varrick cursed as consoles around him began to spark and a few exploded, he could hear the hull plate of his ship fall off from the gravimetric pull.

"Decks have been compromised across our portside, breaches detected on several decks, emergency response teams are en-route." The ensign informed him as he got back to his station.

Varrick cursed at how effective the human weapons were, they seemed lethally precise for massive guns in space. He ordered his fleet.

>"All ships scatter don't let the enemy have you clustered, they'd pick us off much easily to remain clustered."<p>

As his vessels did so, he wondered what was happening on the world below.

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Shepard was expecting a little more of a covenant like approach, not what these aliens were doing, the first wave arrived on the west and eastside of the city planning to cut off the main roads, and a force took the north with what looked like a lot of air support, down south, it seemed they had thrown whatever else they could spare.

Enemy drop ships were fairly easy to destroy, the 108mm guns made short work of them as they flew over, but still a few managed to get to ground. The aliens were different, which was pretty much all Shepard could summarise of these creatures. They were tall, lanky, really bony, and ugly as fuck, aside from having clean angled faces they were pretty ugly in his opinion.

The sentry turrets dealt with a few of the aliens as they entered into training ground, the beings had something like energy shields, but it seemed that they weren't actual energy shields as one marine armed with a UCAF made, Plasma Devastator, a two hand plasma cannon which were given out not long ago the UCAF troops in the field, brought down a number of these aliens with ease.

Shepard and Lazoroski found themselves firing from their second storey position overlooking the alien advance, they picked off a few with their ARs, Shepard pulled his SMG and began to fire off at some aliens attempting to flank them. It seemed these beings were more cautious and less ruthless in combat.

As one tried to break cover and reach them with a grenade, Shepard put a compression round through its head, the 9mm blew out its brains across the asphalt of the fabricated ruins messily. Shepard changed his 9mm AP to EMP, the electrically charged ammo would be just as

lethal as his AP rounds, but it seemed the shields of these aliens were consuming more ammo to disable then kill them.

As he loaded his EMP mag, there was a loud roar as an enemy gunship flew over and dropped something down in the street, the heavy thud made the ground shudder slightly and Shepard couldn't see crap due to the impact kicking up smoke and dust. There was a loud groan as the machine walked out from the smoke.

Shepard used the scope of his SMG to confirm what he was seeing, it was a damn mechanised walker, it had a tubular head with two circles looking around, one arm that had a bunch of barrels and one with what looking like a missile launcher. He swore.

>"We've got an alien walker of sorts down here, we need energy weapon teams to get down here, and we need to remove that fucker before it starts doing serious damage." He reported to Major Harris.<p>

"Roger that, I'm sending along Earl and Miki, they've got the plasma gun and Spartan laser, they'll be there in a few minutes." Harris replied accordingly.

"Make it a fast few minutes because that thing looks like it's going to do some serious damage." Shepard replied as he got a few grenades out.

As the line went off, he turned to Lazo.

>"Laz, get your grenades, I need you to stick them together and tell me when you're done."<p>

"What do you need that many grenades for?" He asked.

"What else?" Shepard gestured to the walking killing machine.

Lazo nodded and got to sticking the grenades together with some utility tape, the stuff seemed to be practically used for everything, and even making pretty good makeshift bombs. Shepard turned back to the troops, he began to watch as the marines fired what they could at the walking mechanised suit, dozens of explosive grenades and assault rifle fire either cut into the shields of the thing or pinged off the armour.

Shepard didn't fire off until the thing was in a close enough position to use the makeshift bomb, as it reached the intersection where he and Lazo were at he grabbed the bomb.

>"Ok... now." He muttered as he stood up from his position and threw the bomb.<p>

He ducked down as the 6 pack of grenades landed below, in a deafening blast, the whole cluster bomb detonated in the intersection. Shepard felt his ears deafen, but thanks to his ear implants and mufflers, his ears were saved from damage. Lazo and him popped out from cover and looked over to the machine, its body was torn to pieces by the blast and it seemed some turians had been standing near it.

Shepard smiled.

>"That fucking worked."<p>

Daniel agreed.

>"Damn straight."<p>

"Umm guys, hostile vehicle on approach, it's a big one." Eric chimed in over their coms.

Daniel and Lazo looked at each other and then realised that their small victory wasn't the most perfect. They looked out as a 6 wheeled vehicle broke through with a large gun and began to fire away at everything in range. Shepard ducked just in time, but as he hit the floor a shot managed to punch through his light marine shielding, it struck his armour but didn't penetrate thankfully.

However Lazo wasn't as lucky, Shepard turned back to the window and saw Lazo, his shields had taken a full hit, armour took the damage, but his helmet wasn't as effective in deflecting everything, the round passed through his temple and exited the side of his skull. He was dead in a pool of his own blood.

Shepard felt somewhat surprised shocked and also desensitised, the years of training in the simulators had made many face the realities of death, which had left veteran trained marines rather unresponsive to death of fellow marines. Shepard was damn surprised, that was for sure, angry, but not as horrified.

He reported in as he jumped to and got to Lazo's body.

>"I've got a man down, repeat, man down; the Sargent took a round to the side of his head."<p>

He heard the major swear.

>"Son of a bitch, calling in medical team to the Sargent's position, Shepard, you're on your own here now, take your troops and regroup at the second defensive perimeter, you're in charge now of Lima platoon."<p>

"Yes sir." Shepard replied as he checked over Lazo's body.

He pulled off the dog tags of the Sargent and tucked them away, he felt bad for what happened to Lazo, but his training kicked in and his survival instinct and what the situation was, was pretty bad. The aliens were pressing hard, hard enough that it was making him and the marines have to fall back.

The alien armoured vehicle pressed onwards using its main gun to blow out chunk from their position, Shepard hated to admit it, but he'd really love someone to blow the living crap out of that thing right now. As if his wish was granted a bright red flash emanated from down the street and gutted the vehicle's side and blasted through the other side.

The occupants of the vehicle ran out screaming as they had been set alight by the blast, as the walking balls of inferno screamed, the marines took the opportunity to waste them, gunners from above including Eric picked off the survivors and turned their attention back to the alien advance which had been suddenly halted.

Shepard was sure he could hold this position, but when he thought of it, these aliens hadn't finished, there were plenty more of them probably mounting another assault his way, he decided to do a quick sound off.

>"I need a casualty count, report."<p>

In a moment a report filed through.

>"Squad 1, we've taken 1 wounded. Squad 2, 1 dead, 1 wounded. Squad 3, 2 wounded. Squad 4, 2 dead, 1 wounded. Squad 5, 3 dead, no wounded. Snipers reporting in, 1, 2, 4, and 3 took a round to the head." The other various members dialled in and he got them noted, he had his troops at nearly half strength, he wasn't in any place to hold them here any longer.<p>

"Ok, front units begin withdrawal, others cover their retreat, mortar teams I need you to redirect your fire at junction 13-5-6 grid marker 9." He ordered.

As his order went out, the mortars began to fall, and the platoon slowly withdrew from the field, but something nagged at Shepard's mind, he looked on his scope to where Lieutenant Adder was, she and her team of ODST had been withdrawn. He seemed to think that she was interested in what happened to Lima, but then again she was still an ONI spook.

He joined his men as they fell back to the base's outskirts; more mortars began to lob shells below, and a few missiles had been redirected to cover their exit, Shepard and his men got to the main defensive line of the base, it was also where Major Harris withdrew to as Lima was pulled out. He greeted Shepard.

"I heard what happened to Lazo, damn shame for such a man his experience." Harris said with a sigh.

"Enemy armour caught us off guard, thankfully the special weapons team dealt with that problem, if a little late." Shepard replied.

"That's true, they were slow to reach you, but what happened has happened, it seems I need to get another commander for Lima." Harris expressed with a shrug.

"That would be fucking fine, but sir, we don't have any more experienced personnel to take command." Shepard explained.

Harris looked at him and Shepard got it.

>"Sir I don't think putting me in command of Lima is a good idea."<p>

"Well tough Sargent, you just got the position and rank, as of now you're leading this platoon either until you're dead or retired." Harris said as he pulled out a pouch of ranking markers and pulled out an additional bar and slapped it onto Shepard's shoulder.

"Congrats, you're in charge of Lima, now I need you to get your force reorganised, we've got a plan and you're needed to attend a briefing for it." Harris explained as he departed, leaving Shepard somewhat shocked. 'What the honest fuck?' He said in his head.

He got a pat on the shoulder as Eric met him.

>"So you got Lazo's position? I guess it's not much of a surprise, he said he wanted you to do it if or when he died. Stupid fucking bastard." He muttered with disappointment.<p>

Eric was Lazo's one friend and enemy, he and him spent a lot of time as old school friends, and even in the academy to now, it were hard

on Eric to lose his best friend. The sniper just sighed and walked off to join the other members of Shepard's platoon. Shepard found himself wondering what the hell kind of shit was waiting for them once this plan got under way, but he decided to give the others a break of his presence and find out what the briefing was.

It didn't take very long for him to find where the meeting was, it was in a ruined shelter from the initial attack, it had taken a direct hit from an energy blast, but it held out long enough and well enough to fit all the remaining field officers, Shepard could see a few new officers just like him, it seemed emergency field promotions were in effect.

Shepard took a position behind a few of the rookie officers and saw Major Harris and Colonel Ian setting up a projector.

>"As you all know, our position here at Orvis won't hold out much longer, the constant attacks have taken out a few of our officers and we weren't exactly prepared for this kind of fighting, whatever this alien species is. It's not like the covenant, and so there has been a consensus, all veteran and senior experienced officers shall remain behind to direct part of the surviving forces to continue fighting on Orvis. And the rest of you will be scattered in order to draw away the hostiles from Orvis and also reach the safety of Shanxi, this means all novice to intermediate shock troopers and marines will be evacuated from Orvis at once."<p>

There was a murmur between all of the officers and troops, it seemed rather rushed, to begin withdrawal now? It didn't seem to make sense, but then again it did, the major was right, they hadn't the forces to continue fighting at the moment, many had been directed to defending the civilian centres and also the base, one or the other had to go, and not to mention there was something else.

Major Harris waited till they quietened down.

>"The other reason for this rapid evacuation was due to info we received from the defensive fleet, they've lost both the Hellfire and Longinus, and Methos has withdrawn to the other side of the system, but good news is that the alien force has been withdrawn, we pummelled them hard enough with the ODP, but the defensive platform won't last another assault. By tomorrow or so, we'll likely lose the ODP and the aliens will push further onto Orvis which is the reason for our evacuation."<p>

Ian then took over.

>"We have 9 ships prepared to evacuation; they will withdraw 21,000 of you from Orvis and head in various directions, after which we shall regroup at Shanxi colony in a couple of days. For the rest of us, we'll be here fighting against the hostiles till relief forces arrive." Ian explained.<p>

There was some sense of protest but Harris interjected.

>"We don't have much of an option soldiers; we're doing this by the book, once the first troop transports arrive in the morning you're all getting out of here. Am I understood?"<p>

There was some hesitation but they all agreed. It seemed rather questionable for what possible reason the Major had decided to remain. As they exited the room, Shepard headed over to his platoon, hopefully things had calmed down with his men, but as he turned a corner he bumped into Lieutenant Adder.

"Corporal I didn't see you there." She excused herself.

"It's actually Sargent now ma'am." He corrected her.

She nodded.

>"Ok Sargent Shepard, funny how your world can get thrown into wack when you least expect it."<p>

He nodded, but it was odd, she actually smiled when she said that.

>"Right, I'm headed to meet with my platoon on our current situation, it seems we're getting pulled out."<p>

Adder replied.

>"Oh that, I have heard of the idea to pull the youngest members of the marines out of here, it guess it seemed more reasonable, the turians aren't exactly happy with what we just did to their fleet." She mumbled.<p>

"Wait who?" Shepard asked.

Adder realised her mistake and replied

>"Oh nothing, you'll be on the UCAF Destroyer- Adjutant Method, you'll be heading on the point between the northern pole so be careful, the winds get pretty cold when travelling there."<p>

"What about you?" He asked.

Adder hesitated in replying but managed to say.

>"I'm going aboard a stealth cruiser, and I can't tell you the name, but we'll meet you at Shanxi." She replied with a smile.<p>

He waved her goodbye before heading over to his men on the other side of the complex, when he got to them, they saluted as a whole. He nodded.

>"As you were soldiers." He told them.<p>

"Sir, we've heard of your promotion, it's untimely that Lazo went out like that, but it's good to have you with us." One corporal said.

"Thank you corporal, I'll do my best to command where Lazo had, but at the moment we're required for evac, the commanders have decided than rather risking any more of our lives we're going to be pulled back to Shaxni to regroup and possibly counter attack." He explained.

There was some looks thrown around and they agreed it sounded pretty straight forward. Shepard then began detailing what was going to happen.

>"We're being taken to the UCAF Adjutant Method tomorrow morning, you'll all be required to gather all you need and prepare for the morning after that the rest will be just the usual, a quick rest before we're probably sent back into action."<p>

There wasn't much to be said aside from some speculation as to whom the aliens were, but aside from that, it was received and they saluted as they headed off to do as they needed to. Shepard sighed and felt his headache from today, he got to his dorm where he found

most of his things still inside, he grabbed what he needed in a duffle and packed extra clips of ammo and grenades in another bag.

As he exited, he headed with his things to the marshalling grounds; it was where he and the others would be pulled out by tomorrow. As he arrived he could see the night and the burning of fires in the distance of the city and from various other locations, but also the sight of 6000 men waiting in the grounds for evacuation.

He joined Lima next to Eta and Theta companies, there was also a whole unit of helldivers nearby, he was impressed helldivers were here. It was probably just a formality for having helldivers for practically every world to help in extreme situations. As he got to his men he lay down on his bags and looked around, everyone was there, smoking talking dreaming and fidgeting.

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Elsewhereâ€¦|

Gal'ia hadn't expected this, being called up to meet with the enclave, but it happened and it happened fast, she was in the main chamber as they talked over what had happened.

>"So are we to understand that you have given the turian hierarchy access to your database on all excursions to and from the flotilla?" An admiral inquired heatedly.<p>

Gal'ia managed to reply.

>"Yes."<p>

"You fool, what in the name of our ancestors were you thinking? Our place in the galaxy-." The admiral was cut off as another protested.

"Gal'ia was in no place to escape and neither did she have any assistance, in her position many would have likely responded in the same way. The only thing I am confused with is why did you tell the turians the location of the relay?" An admiral asked.

Gal'ia wasn't sure how to reply.

>"They said that I was illegally trespassing in forbidden territory and demanded that I either hand over the long range shuttle or face penalties, so I told them about the relay information in exchange they simply leave me alone, they made me compromise."<p>

"And now there's a report flying around that a number of ships from the hierarchy have been redirected to the very relay you told them about, whatever was on the other side has them in a frenzy to get ships there." A captain stated.

"It's true, there's far greater activity than normal, but it may likely be a discovery, at least one to merit the use of warships and a lot of security." A mediator suggested.

"Well what discovery could possibly merit the use of a dreadnought?" An admiral in the background asked.

"Ah, Zorah, we were wondering when you'd show your face, what are you

on about?" An admiral replied.

"There's been movement across the entire turian hierarchy including the movement of one dreadnought and 50 other ships, if that's not a full scale mobilisation for war then I don't know what is." The admiral said as he walked to take a seat.

"What could you have possibly found that could have started such a war Gal'ia?" Zorah asked the young woman.

Gal'ia shrugged.

>"I don't know, all I know is that it's beyond our control now." She replied.<p>

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The roar of heavy transports were a welcome noise, Shepard stepped forward and grabbed the side of the transport before entering alongside his fellow marines, they all piled into the transport and took their seats, in a few minutes the whole thing was packed. As it took off to leave they noticed a lot of activity in orbit.

They could see movement in space where the ships had taken a stable orbit. Shepard turned his attention to a large silhouette of the Adjutant; she was an angled vessel sharp and beautiful at least to those who've seen them in action. As the transport made its final approach there was a buzz of activity from the fleet.

"Incoming hostile forces, detecting multiple energy signatures at the edge of the system they're all on approach to Orvis, all evacuation ships prepare for immediate departure, hostile ships will arrive at Orvis within the hour." A report came in.

As the alien forces made their approach the UCAF ships began to break orbit, Adjutant was the last ship to leave as it was to carry many of the troops. Shepard was the first to disembark on the UCAF destroyer.

The 2.1km destroyer then began to pull out as the fleet reached range of Orvis, Shepard headed to the command bridge to see what was going on, on his way he was greeted by the ship's AI.

>"Hello Sargent Shepard, you have safely arrived, it's good to see at least everything works out in one way." The blue holographic woman said as she followed him.<p>

"That's good to know, I need to get to the bridge" He wasn't sure about her name.

"I am Delilah. The smart AI for the Adjutant, I've been in active service for a couple of decades now, how can I help?" She asked.

"Just take me to the bridge." He replied.

She nodded. "Very well."

As they reached the bridge, the ship began to rock, Shepard found himself looking over at the command consoles of what was going on. It seemed a dozen or so hostiles had decided to chase down the Adjutant, it was hampering their ability to escape, but it seemed the captain

of this ship seemed to know what to do.

As he approached the front of the command bridge he saw a woman in full black uniform, she had her hair in a bun, she had emerald eyes and red hair, and she had a commanding figure.

>"Bring us around, hard to starboard, how long till our slip-space drive is active?" She asked Delilah.<p>

The AI reappeared and explained.

>"Slip-space drive is active however without a proper jump coordinate we would be forced to make a beeline to whatever is directly ahead."<p>

As the ship rocked from a direct hit, the captain ordered.

>"Make it happen, we're getting out of here one way or another, bring us to face point 942,34,11."<p>

"Captain Faust that is directly-." Delilah was cut off.

"I know damn it, but we don't have enough time to pull off a complex jump, get us there and improvise the rest of the way." Faust ordered.

Delilah nodded.

>"As you wish captain, spinning up FTL."<p>

The ship twisted around the volley of rounds fired at it, and managed to lock a route out of here, in moments they were plunged into slip-space and towards the relay.

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Very tired at the moment, I have been awake for 4 days now and I don't think I can stay awake.

3. Chapter 3

CH3: He who fights and runs awayâ€|

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Tyr's Arm- Verne's Edge

Verne's Edge is exactly as it sounds, the region is the edge of the spiral arm of the cluster and it is recorded to have the highest concentrations of dark matter and various spatial anomalies along with unexplored regions. It was also the perfect place to find the alien artefact; it was here the mysterious construct was discovered by the ONI.

Of course the location was disclosed prior to the situation that occurred, though only a few starships which had been in the reach of the system received the coordinates due to risks of accidentally jumping to the system in which the artefact was discovered. Of course the only people who'd be damn crazy enough to go there would be a very few.

And of course the officer of the Adjutant Method had no qualms about jumping the whole ship right into the jaws of the hostiles, for what

possible reason she could have done so was calculated like this, surviving a direct attach against 8 or 9 ships seemed unlikely, going to have to jump at a random location that wasn't far away was even more dangerous due to the sheer amount of time taken to calculate the jump, and the location of the Adjutant was closest to the safe zone of jumping to the artefact.

Now the problem which was to follow was very clear.

>"We have no means of jumping out of the system if we fall under attack there?" Shepard summarised.<p>

Delilah decided to explain the finesse of the slip-space drive jumps. "Yes and no, our ships weren't exactly made for continuous jumps, the charge in the drives are set at a specific quantum frequency and also set energy for that jump, once the energy is dispersed. We will come out of slip-space and into real space, the problem is recalculating the whole thing again, stellar drift occurs as we travel and it takes the entire navigational array to ensure the jump is pinpoint accurate, and when we exit the whole thing resets. So we have to then recalculate the whole thing while charging the drives and ensuring we don't have any residual quantumâ€|" Delilah realised the Sargent wasn't too pleased.

"Ok, summing it all up, we can't jump for approximately 10 to 15 minutes without more accurate coordinates, and also we were asked to randomize our jumps so we can't head straight to Shanxi." Delilah summarised plainly.

"And our situation would be the hostiles are very likely to have set up an entire force to wait at the artefact, once we've finished our transition we'll encounter them. And if they have sufficiently larger numbers we're in for a rough fight." Captain Faust stated fairly grimly knowing what they could be up against.

"So either we drop out of slip-space now and brave what possible things could be waiting out here in unexplored space, or we jump into the system and face the entire alien fleet, and this is purely assuming either one is bad." Delilah said aptly with a shrug.

Shepard sighed; he was tapped on the side of the shoulder as Major Harris walked over to the tactical display.

>"We don't have many options at this point in time, and considering we have proper maps of the system in which the artefact is hidden, it'd be safer trying to calculate the jump coordinates there, that is if we don't run head first into the alien forcesâ€|" Harris then looked over something on the display and then thought about the reports back on Orvis what the artefact could do.
"â€|"Or there is another option."

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Relay 314

Turian 4, 5, 7,8th expedition forces

The fleets of the turian hierarchy had been building up here at the relay in the event of a breakthrough from the new hostile race called humans, the area had been under heavy guard by mainly exploration and expedition forces, of course the fleets involved weren't actual

exploration or expedition.

The ships were patrol forces meant to be guarding the Attican Traverse from the forces of the Terminus clusters, but of course they weren't as good as they were intended, most colonies attacked by slavers and pirates wouldn't receive proper assistance till nearly a few days after an attack. This made life fairly difficult for people living in the Traverse, but of course the turian hierarchy denies any failure to perform.

But now that there was a very real enemy to which the hierarchy could fight, orders went out from the hierarchy to deploy as many ships here to guard the relay till a foothold could be established in this region of space. The hierarchy had no doubt that this new enemy would force the council's hand into allowing the hierarchy full reign in dealing with the humans.

Venari Pallin felt as if the whole thing was becoming overblown by the hierarchy's reports to the council of the dangers of this new race, he could understand the thirst to fight a challenging force, but the hierarchy was making these humans sound as if they were a galaxy spanning threat. He couldn't imagine the sheer implications of what would happen once the fighting died down and the humans emerged the victorious.

Of course that sounded defeatist in some of his fellow soldier's ears, but he stood against the idea of pushing this war as far as it was necessary, the hierarchy didn't even know of what power the human forces wielded and going in blindly seemed arrogant even by their standards. It was only a matter of time before the humans attacked the relay and broke through.

Pallin stood at the window of his office on the cruiser he was stationed on, he pondered on when the next fleet was set to arrive, he knew the Arms of Vindication was coming from Palaven the hierarchy was desperate to hold this position to keep the humans bottled up in their space. Of course that was assuming this was the only relay they had discovered.

It was then his com beeped.
>"Yes?" He answered.<p>

"Commander, we're picking up strange energy signatures coming from the edge of our sensors, the frigates are reporting there might be a possible anomaly in our sensors but we can't determine what it is, it just has a very high gravitational field." The crewman reported.

Pallin acknowledged.
>"I'll be there, just keep a lock on that anomaly."<p>

He got his armour back on before exiting his room, as he headed up to the bridge he was greeted by the captain. "Pallin, what's the situation?" The heavy black and dark blue armoured officer inquired.

"We don't know sir, there's been a report of an anomalous signature which has appeared in the system, we can't determine what it is, it's just that it's creating a high gravimetric field. Whatever it is, it's powerful enough to make the frigate pickets to go on alert."

Pallin replied.

"It's just like the subspace ghosts." The captain chuckled.

"Subspace ghosts?" Pallin repeated.

"Yes, there's an old story of something in the depths of subspace which causes ships to see strange sensor movements from regions of space, salarians called them subspace impossibilities, and asari call them shadow stars, we call them ghosts because they're something that's there, we just can't see them." The captain explained.

"Well whatever this is, it isn't a ghost sir, I'm sure of it." Pallin replied.

As they arrived on the bridge from the long trip in the lift, which really annoyed Pallin, he hated those lifts; they haven't been improved in the past 80 years they've been in active service which has him amazed they haven't made something faster. As the captain took his seat he inquired.

>"What is the situation ensign?"<p>

Across the dimly lit combat information centre, the ensign replied.

>"The gravimetric fields have rapidly increased in the last 10 minutes sir, whatever it is it's like its coming out of subspace."<p>

"What?!" The captain exclaimed.

"Sir there's an energy spike, radiation concentrations are off the scale." Another crewman added.

Pallin ordered.

>"Bring up a display on the gravimetric field."<p>

The screen appeared from their starboard camera and it showed nothing, but all their sensors indicated something was coming, there was another alert.

>"Sir the Arms of Vindication has just arrived with the rest of the 9th fleet from the other side of the relay."<p>

"Tell them the situation and have them take up a position with us immediately." The captain ordered.

"Sir, there's something coming through!" The ensign shouted.

Pallin looked at the screen and this time he was blinded by the light it produced, a ripple of light appeared in the place of normal space, it was enough to make him order.

>"All stations to high alert."<p>

It was then the light subsided slightly allowing him to view the screen again. This time there was a shape an elongated shape, but it was massive, it was larger than a dreadnought, but it wasn't just that, it had markings of the human vessels he had heard about. It made him blanch.

>"What in the nameâ€|" "<p>

There were a number of alerts now ringing across the ship.
>"Sir, vessel appears to be human, but this thing is massive, power readings indicate some sort of weapon system charging. It's turning to face the relay!" The ensign stated in alarm.<p>

It was then Commander Pallin saw the face of death, the human vessel turned to face them, and then fired.

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The first shot from the XCF-UTF-XL984 Advanced Magnetic Acceleration Cannon stuck a large enemy vessel. It blew past other ships in the lines of the alien fleet. The 750 tons of tungsten practically did most of the job for them, considering the sheer gravimetric field of the gun could cause ships without a counter field to stop themselves from being pulled in.

It wasn't just the effect of the gravity that caused the most damage, it was the panic, the enemy fleet had been completely caught off guard when they attacked, the Adjutant Method quickly capitalised on the mayhem caused by its arrival by letting loose the rest of its 3 shot volley on the other ships nearby.

Faust in her command chair tightly held herself as she ordered.

>"All main batteries and CIWS light up those ships. Helm, bring us to bear on that relay!" She then contacted the main engineering. "I hope you've prepared to change the shield harmonics when we get to the relay I don't want the ship to get ripped to pieces when we jump."<p>

"No problems, we'll be ready by then." The chief engineer replied.

"This is riskier than the Tundra Gambit." Harris muttered as he held onto the bridge railing behind the command chair.

"Well no backing out now major, either we do or die." Faust replied with determination in her voice.

"Ma'am there is one enemy cruiser with frigates, which I add loosely to cruiser, are on approach." Delilah warned.

"Bring the MAC to bear on that cruiser, load ionic composition shell. That should be enough to destroy their cruiser." She ordered.

Delilah nodded and the ship's automated loader selected the ammo type, as a future reference the UCAF employs large scale ammunition variations and there are various MAC types as well, making the UCAF class of weaponry hard to determine unless knowing the fleets the ships are assigned to.

The Adjutant turned sharply to face the enemy vessels attempting to strike at them, the enemy cruiser a very bulky cruiser which looked like an eagle of sorts fired at the Adjutant as much as it could. The sheer volume of fire may have been a problem if the Adjutant wasn't an assault cruiser, but considering that it was, it absorbed the hits and got its MAC right in the sights of the cruiser.

The Adjutant fired and sent its lethal payload of 750 tons of tungsten at 45% the speed of light, the shot distorted light slightly as it exited the MAC barrel, the blast of the gun blinded those who looked at it, but devastated whatever was in front of it. The shot impacted the bow of the alien vessel and seemed to cause the ship to pancake on itself.

The MACs force was so powerful it had caused the alien vessel's nose to compact along with the rest of the ship, from its length it was compacted into a tenth of the size. The sight was surreal to some, but it didn't last very long, the vessel exploded after a few moments and sent a blast which shook the surrounding vessels.

The Adjutant didn't seem slightly phased by the explosion; the ship ploughed through the enemy vessels like nothing was there. The secondary armaments across the Adjutant's bow opened fire on the hostile ships as it passed, keeping them from getting in the way of the Adjutant. Faust didn't stop there.

>"Fire off the Cascades, full spread."<p>

The missile pods on each side of the ship let loose dozens of ionic missile canisters, each one carried a powerful package of energised particle emitters which upon penetrating a shield and then hitting a hull would activate an overcharge of the smaller emitters inside the canisters, the resulting explosion would cover a significant area and wipe out any close range energy weapons from being fired.

The canisters launched didn't have much time before the point defences of the hostile ships tried picking them off, but the canisters got through enough to cover a large enough area, on the bridge Delilah ordered.

>"Brace for shockwave!"<p>

In moments the area was glowing with bright multi-spectrum of lights, then there was a bright flash, bright enough to blind even the UCAF personnel, it was understandable, the canisters weren't meant to be fired so close to the ship. The brightness ended with a ripple of light like a corona which expanded across space.

The Adjutant managed to avoid being covered in its own explosive shockwave, it dodged between many of the opposing vessels and headed straight for the relay. On the bridge Faust sighed.

>"Ok here's the tricky part, is everything set?" She called down to engineering.<p>

"Ma'am we're ready, either we blow up or we survive, it's all up to the ship." The chief engineer replied.

"Delilah, take us in." Faust ordered.

The AI nodded and guided the vessel directly to the relay, as they passed close enough to the relay, the charges of energy from the massive construct began to charge the hull of the ship till it reached the middle and then the rest of space was warped as they were slung forward. Shepard braced himself as they catapulted forwards, he felt the inertial dampeners kick in to ease the inertia of the jump.

Harris who after having his eyes closed, asked.

>"Ok, so how did the jump go?"<p>

Delilah appeared and replied.

>"All systems check, and we are heading exactly where we need to, hopefully no unexpected surprises." The AI added as she continued analysing their current course.<p>

"Well if there are any surprises, it would be from HIGH COM about this relay, it's amazing that it could send across thousands of light years in minutes, rather than hours." The captain stated.

"Right and their FTL is how superior to ours?" Shepard asked.

"They can't actually jump that far, from what our calculations estimate they took 2 days to make the trip to Orvis, which would mean they would have to travel possibly 24 light years per day at their max, which would pale in comparison to a UCAF class slip-space drive." Delilah stated.

"Thanks for that, now can we focus on what we're planning to do when we get across the other side?" Harris asked.

"We could find a nice little planet to wait this out on." Shepard suggested.

"Well thankfully it's not your call Shepard, I've got another idea, something a bit more than just some rock to land on and wait. I've determined that these races are quite dependant on these relays for travel or else how would they expand their population so far out? It's possible we could do a bit of advanced scouting while waiting for the UCAF to counter the incursion on Orvis. Once then we will return to the UCAF with all given data on the aliens, if that's enough the UCAF would expand their efforts to deal with these aliens." Captain Faust explained.

"That sounds good and all, but having thousands of raw marines on your ship who haven't exactly been in many warzones doesn't seem so safe, and not to mention we don't exactly have a safe haven to which we could hide if we had to." Shepard stated clearly.

Faust admitted. "That's true; we'd need to establish a base of sorts while we're outside of UCAF controlled space, sure it's risky, but better than any other option."

"What about heading back to Shanxi?" Harris asked.

Delilah replied to his question. "That might be a problem, my navigational data had been damaged during the engagement with the hostiles, if I even managed to salvage a small portion of data, we'd have to make a fairly blind jump, and sending a subspace probe may take a very long time to determine the location, or we'd be jumping just as blind." The AI shrugged.

"Oh that's just great, so either we jump blind or wait a few months for any of the probes to determine how far we'd have to travel to get back to human space. Who wants to choose?" Shepard stated sardonically.

"We don't have much of an option marine, so stow it, we're going to be stuck on this side of the galaxy for a while, and my authority still has weight, do you understand?" Harris shot a commanding look

over at Shepard.

The new sergeant paused a moment and then nodded.
>"Yes sir, I understand clearly."<p>

"Good, its best you get back to your men and make sure they're all are accounted for, we're going to be here for a while so make sure they know what's going on and make sure they're prepared for anything." Harris added before he left.

Shepard nodded and pushed by some officers on the way out. As he left Harris asked.
>"What's coming next?"<p>

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Pallin felt his head aching from the attack, he was severely disorientated, it took him a while to get his bearings, and he then felt a hand push him back down.
>"Sir, you have a concussion as well as a number of broken ribs and internal bleeding, you need to remain still."<p>

He wasn't fond of medical attention, but he understood, he remained still. He then took a moment to look around, there was nothing much just a lot of light. Then he heard people around him shouting and groaning, and a few screaming. Pallin looked over to where a bunch of turians remained wounded; there were a few crewmen with medical equipment attempting to deal with the dying, but it was unknown as to how bad the wounded were.

He was then tapped on the shoulder; he saw the face of the crewman of the ship.
>"Commander, how's the head?"<p>

"Could be betterâ€¦| what happened?" He asked.

"The captain died, and the fleet was nearly annihilated during the fight. We're currently en route to one of the carriers which weren't hit during the attack." The crewman replied.

He then got up in a rush regardless of the pain of his injury and asked.
>"What happened to the Arms of Vindication?"<p>

The crewman startled replied somewhat sombrely.
>"Sir, the entire ship was destroyed in the attempt to stop the enemy vessel; all 10,000 crewmen went down with the ship."<p>

Pallin dreaded that, the hierarchy's largest warship was no match for the monster of a warship; it had blown right by everything that the fleet had put up. He lay back down in pain and thought to himself what the spirits were thinking; this had become more than just serious, if the warship was any indication, the hierarchy may have bitten off more than it could chew.

Pallin never knew it at the time but he was right. However there was far more blood to be spilt before the hierarchy recognised its mistake.

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Eric had a habit of doing stupid things when he was somewhere new, and being on the Adjutant was no exception, he knew that there was a lot cameras and sensors probably on the ship to know of any breaches across the ship, but he also knew what a lot of sensors looked like and how to disable them. He managed effectively to avoid most of the sensors.

As he took a left at a junction he found himself in a tight spot, he had to breathe in and squeeze as hard as he could between the vent that led to the lower cryo-bays and the storage level, as he slid through he noticed there were over half a dozen bays, the strange thing was that bay 7 was locked down due to maintenance.

He wasn't sure but he knew that if a bay was under lockdown it usually meant the venting to the section was redirected, but it seemed the bay was linked with the main vents, he found it slightly strange. The other strange thing was that there was a freezing cold breeze coming from the bay's vents, which meant the cryo-tubes there were in use.

He thought about whether or not he should go do it. His consciousness began telling him what would possibly be going on, his little good soldier and bad soldier popped up, well at least the bad one did. The grimy dirty armour of the bad soldier said.
>"Hey what could possibly go wrong? I mean sure we could get busted, but seriously we've been in worse right?"<p>

The clean armoured good soldier argued.
>"Don't do it, the situation isn't going to end well and you know it, whatever's going on down there's not worth getting busted."<p>

"Oh come on what could we possibly get busted for looking inside a cryo-bay? Sure it's off limits, but you've snuck into the women's locker room and got into worse shit than this man." The bad soldier countered.

"We got severely bitch slapped and banned from going anywhere near women's locker rooms for the rest of our life, remember? And to add to that, we have no idea what's going on, just ask Harris or better yet, ask Shepard maybe he could get a look?" The good soldier suggested.

Eric then interrupted.
>"Hang on aren't you guys supposed to be my conscious?"<p>

The two looked at each other and replied in unison.
>"Yes."<p>

"So why do I have a bad soldier and good soldier? Shouldn't I have some guy who just represents me alone?" Eric asked.

"Well, because that guy only comes in when we're not here and also if we get fired. Not to mention the angel and devil guys were getting sick of this shit for a while now so they had a budget cut and had us to replace them." Good soldier explained.

"Oh ok, well what the fuck, I'll just do it out of curiosity." He said as he pulled out a mag wrench.

The good soldier then said to the bad.
>"We're not doing this very well are we?"<p>

"I can see why the other guys left." Bad agreed.

Eric carefully pulled the grate to the bay open and peered inside, he could see a few dozen or so pods occupied, which surprised him, who the hell was in use of that many pods? He wasn't sure but he knew that whoever was inside them had to have been here a while ago, the pods had all frozen over with ice.

He lowered himself into the bay and landed in a crouch, he began looking around the room. He got the first pod in reach and carefully brushed his hand across the frosted glass and found something, he couldn't actually believe it at first, he then hurried over to the next pod and cleared the ice before looking in and then he continued till he got to the 5th.

"They're Spartans." He said to himself.

It was then he heard the doors open to the bay that he was panicking; he came to face a bright light and heard someone shout.
>"On the ground, don't move." A man shouted with a M6A- Black Hawk pointed.<p>

Eric didn't have much of a choice; the handgun would have killed him at this range, no escape considering how far the pod was from vent. He gritted his teeth and wondered if he could be saved, he then recalled Shepard. There might be some chance of survival if he wasn't shot first.

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Shepard was in the middle of getting a head count when he noticed something, Eric was missing, he began asking the others if they knew if he had been on the transport and they replied with the same response he was present before they had left the planet. But now it seemed the sneaky bastard had slipped off into the depths of the ship without telling anyone where he was going.

Shepard wondered how the hell Daniel had to have dealt with the guy, but he decided to deal with this himself, he was about go and leave for the bridge to search for Eric, when he received a call.

>"Sargent Shepard to isolation room 2."<p>

Shepard knew what that meant, he replied on his com.
>"Acknowledged I'll be there in a few minutes."<p>

He sighed this was going to be an eventful first day for him alright, he wondered how much longer till they reached the other side of the relay, he hurried down to the nearest elevator and activated it. It was also when he heard the alarms begin to ring; they were coming out of the range of the relay's jump.

>"Belay previous level, priority officer to bridge." He ordered to the lift commands.<p>

The lift sent him up to the bridge, it got a few moments but he felt the ship shudder slightly from impacts and then he realised that there was something going on.

>"All hands to combat stations, we're attempting to break through an enemy blockade." Delilah announced.<p>

There were a few more shudders before the whole ship rumbled from a MAC blast; the main gun was just fired at someone and probably some poor bastard who didn't see it coming. The while ship began to vibrate as the secondary weapons came online, the number of rail batteries and Vulcan mini-guns were enough to probably rock the whole ship, but thankfully there was the 2.5 meters of hull plating and energised armour along with shields to stop anything from hitting the ship or rocking it, along with the inertial dampeners.

As he arrived on the bridge he was greeted by a lot of swearing and shouting.

>"Oh fuckâ€|" The helmsmen shouted as he pulled the controls, the ship twisted and avoided hitting an alien vessel.<p>

The ship had jumped right into the midst of an alien fleet, the whole thing surprised their enemies more than the helmsmen. The enemy fleet began splitting off to avoid being struck by the UCAF vessel; thankfully the alien fleet weren't as many as those guarding the other side. The batteries of the ship fired in an attempt to push the hostiles away.

As the Adjutant ploughed through dangerously close to enemy vessels, the ship avoided a lot of close calls, as the ship managed to break away from the hostile vessels and began to charge its slip-space drives.

>"Drives are fully charged, we're going at these coordinates. 554-334-76." Faust ordered.<p>

"Acknowledged." Delilah replied as she brought the destroyer towards the jump point.

The hostile vessels tried to engage the ship as it made to the jump point, as it jumped the turians reported it.

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Citadel- Council Tower

Reports floated in the past few days, and it was becoming blatantly obvious that things were rapidly spiralling out of control; the humans had been putting up quite a fight. The UCAF had been fighting them since the incident at 314, but most of these were reports from the turian hierarchy, the humans were determined to fight even as the turians besieged and stormed one of their colonies.

The homeworld of the humans that had been initially suggested proved to be false and the battle that ensued was devastating for the turians, even though the humans had a lot less vessels the turian hierarchy found that the humans wielded massive ships that equalled dreadnoughts and cruisers and even vessels which happen to be massive beyond normal construction.

The hierarchy hadn't disclosed this information publically at least not yet, but once the war got underway there was no holding back in their opinion, it was all or nothing. For the council this was a crisis with no resolution. They were faced with an enemy which had a lot more firepower and technology that even the Protheans couldn't

match.

It was becoming steadily alarming as to how much more blood was going to be spilt if there wasn't a resolution found quickly. But with how things were looking, the council was under pressure to aid the turian hierarchy, as news had spread only to higher members of the council's governments, it proved quite frightening to the leaders of each representative species.

There was now a planned agreement to enact full mobilisation of military forces to help attack the humans. But the council wouldn't have it, the asari agreed against mobilisation and the salarians were thinking something more subtle than all-out war, but the turians remained absolute in their judgement that a full scale war was the only way to deal with the humans.

The council was split on the situation, but an overall agreement was decided, there was no confirmation with the public that there was a threat. Mankind did not exist and there was only a border issue being disputed between certain races that were encountered, and was being dealt with quickly.

Of course the excuse wasn't going to hold out for very long if there was a direct encounter with a human vessel or scout force in their own part of the galaxy, it would force their hand into dealing with the UCAF sooner. But for now, it was for the council to bide its time and hold out till a resolution could be made.

At least what they hoped to accomplishâ€|

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AN: Ok would anyone like to submit a suggestion? And also I can accept OCs, and such.

4. Chapter 4

CH4: â€|Lives to fight another day

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Hey all the story's picking up and I'm getting overtaxed with things here, I'm going to get my license for my car, and going to Korea soon. And also it seems my head is going out the window from stress, at the rate my life's going I'll have an aneurism before the end of this year.

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Location: Unknown

Date: 2555/3/3

Time Index: UCAF (Anomia- GMT: 9:00) Shipboard time: 14:00

The Adjutant exited slip space about a good day's trip from their escape into a binary star system which had 9 planets, the turians had been left in havoc when they made their flashy exit from the relay. It would surely stir up the alien race and leave them open for

attack, but there was still plenty of things to do before then, firstly Shepard had one meeting to attend to about one of his men sneaking around in a sealed cryo-bay. And Faust had to speak with him right after his little meeting with Eric in the cell of the ship.

Shepard entered into the brig of the ship where he found the mischief maker in a cell hanging upside down off a bunk bed reading a small piece on recent news. He put down the holo slate and waved.
>"Hey sarge, we've got to talk."<p>

"That's what I was going to sayâ€|" Shepard replied.

"Good because I don't know how to tell you this, especially since we're well and truly far from any UCAF court or fleet." Eric said as he let go of the top bunk and landed on his hands and lay himself on the lower bunk bed.

Shepard remained standing there when Eric said.
>"We've got Spartans on board the ship." The marine said it clearly and plainly.<p>

"What?" Shepard perplexed.

"I was arrested because I was caught sneaking inside the cryo-bay of the ship, but the sealed off section is holding over an entire company of shock trooper class Spartan Betas, I mean I saw 110 Spartans well close to it, they all had commando pattern armour design, but their company I saw didn't match any configuration on UCAF records." Eric detailed carefully and directly.

Shepard looked around where a guard was sitting at his desk not paying attention or at least not acting like he was, the cameras seemed to be focused on him and Eric, he knew that this wasn't short of anything Faust was capable of doing which was pretty apparent. Shepard then asked.
>"What's the company number and name on their suits?"<p>

"No idea. Just the matching symbols on their suits match the Helldiver's 33rd legion, sir they're part of the Cerberus legion. You know the blood thirsters, hellfire marines, those 'guys'." He made air gestures of the seriousness of the helldiver force.

"Yes Eric I know who the helldivers 33rd legion are, but why do they have a whole Spartan force named on them?" Shepard asked.

"I haven't a clue, but it's a good bet they're here to cause a lot of shit for their enemies, probably ONI pulling some strings to get them here." Eric replied.

"Or they planned this in advance knowing that an alien attack was very likely on Orvis." Shepard said to himself.

"Well yeah there's that, but don't get carried away. The Cerberus legion's been on the front for the last 25 years, I don't think they'd just move them out here." Eric said with reassurance.

"Let's just hope they didn't, those blood thirsty bastards aren't going to let anything get in the way of victory or death I don't see them as much of an effective vanguard rather than kamikaze's, I'll

talk to you later, but I can't bail you until the captain agrees on a suitable punishment." Shepard said thoughtfully.

"Oh come on man, I don't want to be stuck here another day." Eric groaned.

"No choice marine, suck it up and shut it up, stay there or bitch to the captain, and I'm sure she'll lock you down here even longer." He told Eric.

Eric just groaned louder and face palmed, he sat there as Shepard left the brig. He hoped that Eric doesn't do anything to piss off the captain any further, there was already this suspicion he was building towards the woman. Faust didn't seem like the kind of woman to hold secrets, but then again he had only known her for a few hours.

He headed back to the barracks, taking a left at the junction between the hangar and the armoury he arrived at the lockers and the rec room before entering into the barracks, he found his men billeted in their section. Housing 6000 troops inside the Adjutant plus the other 9000 wasn't easy, the whole ship was meant to carry a total compliment of 10,500+ personnel, of course there were certain variations in design of a UCAF ship like the Adjutant, but the ship's largest compliment was already maxed.

They had to find a location to put down a temporary base and help set up the excess of troops before proceeding or resources would become dangerously stretched on the ship. At the moment Shepard knew that Faust would be seeking out a star system which had no likeable chance of being located near a relay.

There was also the need to hide the location out of reach from even FTL capable ships, which was a bit harder to find, considering those sorts of locations would be dangerous for even planets. However Delilah was determined to pull this off with what resources she had at her disposal, which meant that they'd likely spend another day or so in transit before stopping to examine a possible habitable world and make sure to dispatch a force to begin construction of a facility.

But Shepard was determined to get a word in with Captain Faust before that happened, Major Harris would probably be discussing the situation with Captain Faust in her quarters before they proceeded with the idea. Call Shepard paranoid but he believed what Eric had told him, the PFC was a pain in the ass for a reason, but ignoring him was a very bad idea.

Upon returning back to the bridge he found the captain filing through some reports, she had company in the form of 8 other officers, he could identify most of them by their rank and insignia's, Harris was seated nearby on a console drinking a cup of coffee. Shepard realised he probably shouldn't be in this meeting or on the bridge, but since Harris promoted him and since the major didn't bother to listen they let someone else record the details.

"So what's our directive from here?" A major asked.

"Our current objective is to remain undetected and perform hit and run operations, just like what the Haridain 90th fleet did against the covenant juggernaut." Captain Faust replied.

There was a few looks traded between the officers.

>"Ma'am that was an entire fleet with prowlers and stealth ships, long range assault cruisers and destroyers, we're one ship." One lieutenant stated fairly clearly.<p>

Faust replied in turn.

>"I know which makes us a lot more effective, one ship can't be tracked by our enemy and from what we know they can't locate us if we decided to go somewhere where their FTL abilities would be redundant."<p>

"That's true. But what about the excess of personnel? We have too many people on the ship as it is." Another officer stated.

"That can be easily addressed." She motioned for Delilah who appeared and brought out a star map.

The AI clapped her hands and brought up a single world into focus, she smiled cheerfully. "Gentlemen, this is our Haven, it's a habitable world over 3600 light years from the reach of the turians, with 1.3 AU, a 24.5 hour day, and plenty of space, along with flora and fauna, and an oxygen argon and nitrogen atmosphere."

"That sounds nice and all, but troops do want to fight ma'am, we're young but there's 6000 of us ready to go into action when we're called to." A colonel of a battalion said dutifully.

"That I know colonel, which is why we'll begin with cycling through troops, we will shift personnel for R&R when we need to and get others aboard to help in the fight against the turians, from here we'll wait for the UCAF to break the enemy on their end, meanwhile we'll begin fighting them on their own space and lessen the pressure for the UCAF." She explained.

Shepard found her plan audacious; the idea of having a base in enemy space was fairly bold even for a captain, but he had a feeling that she had a lot of help to back her method of warfare. He decided to make his move.

>"So can I assume that there's a reason for having a hundred Spartan Beta units in the cryo-bay was for this purpose?"<p>

Faust and the other officers turned their attention to him, he stood there adamant in his position, and Harris merely shrugged as he stirred his cup of coffee. Faust replied.

>"The presences of the Spartans are here by coincidence, if anything this was a fortunate turn of events that we have them in cryo-stasis."<p>

The other officers seemed baffled, they hadn't known of the Spartan presence aboard the ship aside from a couple of the higher ranked colonels, once they settled, Faust explained.

>"Yes the ship has been carrying Spartans aboard it, and yes I intend to have them assist in future attacks against the turians and their allies, this was why the Adjutant was made, to inflict precision damage to an enemy."<p>

"But you could have at least told us instead of keeping this secret." One colonel pressed.

Then another voice cut in.

>"That is because she was under my orders colonel."<p>

They saw a ONI officer stride forwards from the entrance of the CIC, his rank was admiral, Shepard along with the others saluted reacting to his presence, the officer in question was definitely somehow responsible, but they hadn't forgotten protocol. The admiral greeted them.

>"I am Admiral Mitchell Haden, member of the ONI section III, I was brought to oversee our new enemy's strength, abilities, resources, and then evaluate on the situation. I am for all intents and purposes an observer and I do not exist aboard this ship officially."<p>

The officer shared a grim face when he finished his sentence, they knew he was someone they couldn't trust, he wasn't a non-com he was a watcher an observer intent on testing out the turians like the covenant were tested during the war by specialist observers from the ONI. This would mean disaster for the troops if this admiral had anything to do with the function of the ship or commands.

But seeing as he hadn't made any direct issue of orders it remained apparent things were in Faust's hands. The admiral then finished with.

>"I am to give you your missions, and intelligence for operations against the turians and their allies, you do not take orders directly from me, except in the strictest of reasons and situations."<p>

Once they all understood this he took his leave making a couple of officers noticeably shiver, Shepard knew spooks in his life, but this spook chilled him to his core. It was only when Harris told him about what he knew of the admiral that got him more concerned about the intentions of the Adjutant here in the greater galaxy than fighting on the frontline.

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Aethon Cluster / Nura- Oma Ker

Reports were flooding in from the first expedition forces which were entering into the human's space, it sounded like the war was going well from the initial reports, but it didn't seem like the humans had entirely been stopped, as reports came through of a single enemy ship managing to sneak past the entire turian armada gathering in human space.

The news had spread quickly of a possible surprise attack on the Aethon Cluster due to how close it was to the region where the relay into human space was found, but it was unlikely a true attack would befall the systems of Aethon. There was plenty of turians present on Oma Ker; the planet was a major world for the Hierarchy including shipyards and troops.

Hundreds of millions live on Oma Ker making it fairly difficult to attack without a very sizable force. That said the council had brought in their own forces to monitor the situation that was escalating in human space, it was said that the humans had begun rallying its major forces at its homeworld or so they suspect.

Of course all of this was speculation and Tarrel wasn't much of a gossip, he was a barkeep, and a fine one at that. He cleaned out a

cylinder and placed it with the other clean ones, and did so unconsciously; it was only until he was asked by someone to grab another glass of asari wine.

He grabbed a bottle and filled a clean glass with wine and handed it over. It was for an asari commando, she looked quite seasoned. The asari was in full combat fatigues, she seemed rather keen for a few drinks; next to her were a couple of other asari commandoes, they didn't seem as keen on drinking though.

He stood there and asked.
>"You need anything?"<p>

"We're good." The younger of the two replied aptly.

He nodded and went about checking his beverage reserves. Meanwhile he managed to eavesdrop on a conversation between the asari.
>"So any new reports on the human vessel that broke through the lines?"<p>

"Nothing from what they told us, damn hierarchy's been keeping its mandibles clamped shut, but they are worried about this human ship, it broke through the entire expedition force, nearly 200 ships alone had been gathered including one of the hierarchy's dreadnought. Rumours from the troops there say it was destroyed, but the hierarchy won't admit it." The other asari commando whispered.

Tarrel stood up and moved away silently acting to mind his own business as he grabbed a few new bottles of wine, he couldn't believe what he heard, a single ship breaking through over 200 turian vessels? What sort of ship was it? He passed another round of drinks before he was greeted by a group of turian troopers came in all looking for some steam to blow off.

They all gathered around the front counter jabbering on about personal things, at least for a while, Tarrel passed a few drinks amongst them till they began talking about what was going with the humans. There wasn't much about what was being said, so he decided to whisper something to them.

"Hey soldiers, I've been wondering, but what's with this human vessel that snuck past the fleet?" He inquired.

"It got through because of the arriving fleet at the relay, they were busy greeting the admiral when the ship came around the other side of the system and jumped before anyone could stop it." One trooper replied carefully.

"That's not it you nark, it was because our fleet got its collective rear ends kicked before they could do anything to stop it." A slightly drunker trooper replied.

"Hey Lorin, shut up, we're not supposed to be talking about what happened." Another soldier added.

"But you have to give it credit, the humans broke through, my brother on the expedition fleet that went through got killed when his ship tried to engage the human vessel, it destroyed his vessel and the dreadnought. For spirits sake it destroyed the Arms of Vindication with a single shot" He was finally silenced by a senior officer

who had entered the bar.

"Shut it trooper or the last thing that's going to be destroyed is your reputation and rank, we don't talk of this ever." He warned the drunken trooper seriously.

The trooper shut it and the officer let him go, the other turians all agreed to be silent on the matter, Tarrel had heard enough, if it was true the humans had broken clear of the hierarchy's forces then it was definitely close to Aetheon and that was bad for business. He'd probably have to send a message to his volus contacts to make arrangements for his departure if things did get close to home.

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Date: 2555/3/8

5 days later

The Adjutant arrived on the world they marked as Haven; the location of this world was over 3600 light years from any relay. It was a pain in the neck to find using basic scanning methods, but they came to this one at last. Delilah had spent the better part of a week aiming for a world like this, the third planet in the system, it was 3 times the size of an earth class planet, plenty of space and minerals, it was enough to get mining drones down to harvest and begin early construction. Meanwhile troops were being based as quickly as possible.

The Sanctuary site was a mining station as well as a fortified base where they had begun construction, it was deeply embedded in the recesses of a mountain; thankfully the Adjutant came equipped with plenty of tools and machines intended for long term missions. In the mountain itself teams of engineers and constructor drones and machines worked relentlessly erecting as many habitable sections possible. Along with the mountain complex, prefabs were built in nearby valleys on the planet as well as a concealed facility in the mountain ranges.

The sites were marked numerically, Alpha site was the main trooper garrison in the valley surrounding the mountain, while the mountain range was Delta site for the main observation site overlooking the region, it would serve as an early warning station to any long range FTL signatures, and work as a hub for subspace communication to the UCAF once a long range trans-light communications station was built.

Beta site was a separate region all together, it was on an open plain where agricultural purposes could be enacted, and civilians aboard the ship had a few agriculturalists aboard along with geologists and doctors. They began to seed the region with plant life for the troops. The final site was still under construction, but it was intended to station a docking facility for ships, the UCAF would likely send long range supply ships to the planet once communications were established with command. It'd help to replace soldiers who get killed, as morbid as it may sound it was necessary for new bodies to help relieve exhausted troops.

The Adjutant made landfall to deploy a few spare Elephant C345

Constructors, the redesigned transport vehicles were developed to create prefabricated buildings quickly and carry heavy loads of machinery and equipment, the total count for each vehicle was 6, each carrying all the raw materials needed to prepare for the long haul.

The troops who disembarked totalled 6000 except for Shepard's battalion which surprisingly enough had drawn a short straw from Harris, who had asked for his troops to take first cycle and remain aboard the ship for whatever plan had been concocted by Faust from the intel she received from Admiral Mitchell Haden.

Shepard in truth felt somewhat cheated at the chance to rest for a while since they had been evacuated from Orvis, but Harris had some reason for pulling the entire battalion into this mess. Shepard still had a feeling the Admiral had something up his sleeves, as much as he was an ONI spook and an advisor, the ONI never let a high ranking member of its office to just randomly join without some other agenda.

Shepard in his own thoughts knew this stunk of a lot more than petty politics that the ONI argued with the alliance council; there was a higher chance the operation they were undertaking was likely suicidal due to other factors possibly with hostiles being well equipped or better prepared. But that was assuming there wasn't a Spartan unit doing the dirty work in the first place.

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Date: 2555/3/9

Location: Adjutant- En Route to unknown destination

Back on the ship Shepard and his fellow marines were busy being rearmed and getting some new gear set for them, it seemed someone saw the grossly underequipped troops in dire need of an edge against unknown odds. Shepard and his battalion were inside the large firing range of the Adjutant where they were introduced by the weapons specialist.

The man was a partially cybernetic soldier; he had probably seen his fair share in the war and was experienced in new equipment and gear. The soldier introduced himself. "I am Sargent Casin, I don't have much time to explain explicitly every detail of each new weapon you shall all be receiving, but I'll give you the basics." The sergeant pulled out a set case of weapons each marked by a set of letters and a diagram.

The first one was an ABR-35, it was definitely familiar to an AR, BR and DMR, but it was more of a mix of them. The specialist explained.

>"The ABR-35 Mod 0, Advanced Battle Rifle, it is a highly agile weapon, elegant, precise and lethal to the barrel. It is an 11.45mm battle rifle which has been vastly improved upon, it carries lethal packages of tungsten tipped high explosive rounds, each with ionic cores capable of disabling even the resistant of zealot shields.
The gun in its standard form has 30 to 45 shots, standard holographic sights with a laser pointer and forward handgrip.
>The modifications for the weapon include underslung grenade, shotgun, target marker attachments and even a short hand missile

launcher.
It can come with increased visual gear like holographic auto zoom, up to 12 times in magnification. There is a under barrel attachments for bayonets and flashlights. And there is a rail which can be added to either the sides, front and mid sections of the gun and sights.

>There is also the auto ammo counter and navigational pointer. As for the design of the barrel, it is standard bullpup. Magazines come in various forms, from scimitar, stock, and drum mags. The gun is also equipped with a magnetic driver, allowing for projectiles to be fired at ultra-high ballistic speeds, this feature was incorporated with an inertial dampener to stop the force of the gun from hitting the gunner.
It is suggested that the gun be used in its normal 3 burst fire mode, however single shot may also be effective."

The next weapon was marked the ACC-015D, he pulled the gun out, it was a similar design of the ABR, but aside from bullpup feature it was a lot heavier in design. The sergeant began.

>"This is the ACC, adaptive combat carbine, is a highly unique weapon, it unlike the AR, BR, MA5 or any carbines in general have this design, it is a multi-purpose carbine designed for a wide variety of scenarios.
The ACC has a barrel capable of changing from anywhere between a .50cal type to a 5mm, but the amazing part of it is it also incorporates a magnetic driver and inertial dampeners, but also a multi magnetic rail barrel, allowing the bullet to increase in velocity and force once it exits the barrel.

>The gun allows for similar attachments to be added unto it, the only difference is that it possesses a bayonet compartment allowing for a quick release of the bayonet in close quarter combat.
The gun has one unique attachment and that is the G31-Plasma Infuser, it is a plasma gun which has been slung under the barrel to be used against heavily armoured or shielded enemies. It can be replaced with a plasma launcher which fires a superheated blob of explosive plasma, but that is reserved for specialists only.

>The weapon fires standard 7.65mm rounds, but as stated, it is adaptable to various classes of ammunition and if things get desperate use metal shavings to shoot."<p>

The next gun to be pulled out was a smaller case, it had several warnings and one about explosives from what the large fireball in the middle was any indication. The sergeant carefully opened the case with gloves and goggles and pulled out the next gun on the list.

>"This is a little more advanced than what should be shown, but this is the EC-20 an explosive charge, but it is in a mini missile form, it has a 12cm diameter and its length is 36, it is fired from a pistol trigger attachment which sends this short ranged anti-building, tank, bunker missile to its intended target. The explosive charge is quite devastating, as it can destroy an area of 25 meters in super-heated fire, this is thermite laden as well so please do not smoke near it.
The EC-20 was created for eliminating enemy front doors and shielded sections of vessels, so it's pretty much something you'd leave for demolition experts to deal with."

He put the EC back down and grabbed the next item on his list; he pulled out a fairly obtuse case with the label AA-88, the specialist removed the gun out, it was fairly sturdy looking and rather deadly. He explained enthusiastically what the gun was.

>"Meet the AA-88, an 8 gauge killing machine; it was intended to replace the 12 gauge Auto-Combat-Shotgun 10 and 12. The first deployment of the AA-88 was on the frontlines of the Daedalus

campaign as part of the Helldivers 33rd and 88th legions, the gun has remained effectively the most lethal thing in the UCAFs arsenal of close combat weapons, next to it is the M80 Tactical Applications Shotgun, and the M55 Anvil Tactical Close Quarter Combat Shotgun.
However the AA-88 also is equipped with magnetic dispersal rail barrel and driver, allowing rounds fired to destroy and shred anything in its way.

>The AA-88 is designed to carry a total of 24-48 8 gauge rounds, and even allows it to carry explosive grenade rounds, and various shrapnel and airburst ammo.
The attachments for the AA-88 are a motion, motion, sound, light resonance detector; it is easily the most effective CQC weapon system for elite marines."

After he carefully replaced the shotgun he shuffled through a few papers and found the next weapon, it was then he pulled out a thinner case which had its side marked VCI-A9, the case opened and he pulled out a bullpup SMG with holographic sights.

>"This is fairly simple; it is the VCI-A9, a highly compact SMG designed for all forms of warfare, the VCI was designed with a compression system similar to that of a CSM, but instead the SMG was armed with 10mm instead, but the compression system allows for higher ranges as well as velocities, the SMG can hit a target at 1km away if fired by a skilled marksman. In general the SMG can eliminate targets from a variable of ranges, but what makes this SMG slightly unique is the fact that it possess a rifle attachment.
The rifle attachment extends the SMG and turns it into a carbine which can be used in various scenarios and situations; the 10mm SMG becomes quite a formidable weapons system in turn."

He carefully returned the SMG back into its case; he made sure to leave the case on his left before grabbing another weapon, this time it was a larger case, large enough to fit a small person inside. The specialist removed the casing top and allowed them to see what was inside; it was a fairly devastating looking gun, he motioned at the weapon.

>"This is the 75cal Raptor, a heavy triple barrelled mini-gun designed to hold 2400 rounds and destroy even light armoured and shielded vehicles, it is considerably a weapon for dealing devastating levels of punishment against heavily shielded troops, and it can't be carried unless you have cybernetic augmentations, armour permutations or bio-augmentations to lift the gun.
It can be equipped with an array of heavy attachments, 108mm anti-tank recoilless rifle, 85mm HEAT Guided Missile, 120mm Basilisk anti-armour buster cannon.

>The gun features its own mass driver integrated into the chambers, and there is a micro-ion recycler installed to reduce the cool down time of the gun."<p>

The specialist put the gun down onto the ground before he searched for the next gun; the specialist picked up a large case with just one warning, eye protection needed. The case opened up and he pulled out what looked like hexagonal canister, but that wasn't the only thing, along with the large weapon were a smaller rectangular weapon and an elongated octagonal weapon.

"These are the ASI-M810 Plasma Caster, ASI-M560 Plasma Defender, and the ASI-M775 Plasma Carbine; they are the newest energy based weapons the UCAF R&D departments have been making for some time now.

>They are both manufactured for heavy combat situations against shielded and armoured hostiles, the guns fire superheated bolts of

plasma like covenant weapons.
The Defender is a vastly more agile in design and faster in rate of fire, the bolts fired from it though are weaker as you can imagine, but still the hydrogen fusion cells for it are compact and easy to carry, you can get a total of 25 shots per each cell.

>The Caster being the heavier makes it a pain to carry but the sheer firepower the Caster holds is devastating against moderately shielded vehicles, it has venting fans on either side of the barrel and a single load point on the left side near the rear. The fusion cells required are large, but it can give a fair amount of shots, 10 heavy bolts.
And lastly is the plasma Carbine, it is the newest energy based weapon and fairly the most balanced of all 3 of them, the only problem with it is it overheats on occasion and requires to be maintained well. The Carbine fires a total of 30 shots before reloading, unlike that of a plasma carbine the covenant use, this requires a certain level of finesse for those who are to be equipped these types of weapons due to limited shots.

>I'll emphasis this for all these weapons, they are new, and not something that should be taken lightly, any critical or technical errors please shoulder them if you can, or give them to an engineer."<p>

(AN: This isn't like the WH40k crossover ones due to the fact the UCAF never got their hands on Imperial energy based weapons, so their plasma based weapons aren't as effective here.)

Once he got the prototypes back into storage cases he brought their attention to what equipment they'd be given. The largest case came forward, it was easily a couple of hundred kilos and had enough room to fit a few people inside, there was a side keypad where he pressed a in his access codes. The locks on the case unlocked and allowed him to show what was kept inside.

>"This is the newest piece of gear the UCAF had developed for marines in the field, of course not many units received it thanks to the end of the war, but since we've been tasked with this operation, the UCAF granted access for new gear for troops going up against unknown hostiles.
This is the Trojan APU-MKII; its infantry battle armour designed for heavy combat, its primary function was made for all terrain combat, all though the only downside to this thing is the suit's sheer size is bulky for an individual user to handle in water. Good side to this thing is the suit has over 3 different weapons, 2 under arm attachments which enable it to use either Vulcan light 7.65mm mini-gun, and a fairly devastating 25mm anti-armour machine gun, a third weapon is mounted on the shoulder with any additional equipment, the 3rd weapon can be either a mounted missile launcher, 108mm artillery rifle, or a short range rail gun, or a flamethrower.

>The UCAF R&D had been making sure the suit can withstand plenty of punishment, so they made sure to add energised ablative iridium armour, plus a honeycomb structure of titanium. The suit has at its weakest point 1 inch of titanium plating and thickest is 3 inches in a combo of metals. The suit's visor is equipped with a multitude of sensor programs from basic motion sensors, night vision, infrared, heat, and of course light diffusion sensory.
There is also a fusion drive, jetpack, integral shielding systems which has multi-layer shields overlapping. There are also a number of additional weapons armed with the suit, from a side arm pistol, SMG, carbine and shotgun. The details are pretty much the same for an average Helldiver class APU. Just keep in mind the suit's only made for those who are specially trained in the use of heavy equipment and

weapons."

Putting the APU aside he pulled out a slightly smaller case which had no locking mechanism on, he opened this one with less enthusiasm, it seemed he didn't really bother with whatever was inside. Once the case revealed its contents the marines along with Shepard were baffled as to what the gear was.

Inside was a heavy looking suit but it had attachments for a smaller suit inside of it, it wasn't mechanised at least not noticeably. The specialist then went over what the suit was called.

>"This is the Ballistics Assault Armour. This was made specifically to deal with infantry and infantry alone, it's a suit somewhat close to an APU, but it's less mechanised, the suit is an over layer armour made specifically to withstand mainly projectile and energy based impacts, its heavier in armour but lacks a shield booster. It has certain benefits, mainly better full body protection against attack, but it severely hampers a soldier's ability to make sudden movements.
The suit is mainly consisted of titanium and iridium along with some extra plates of ceramic; this was built for CQC situations where heavier armour is required but compact enough to fit through doorways.

>As you should all know this suit was first made for such combat during the early days of the human covenant war but was recalled due to lack of personnel willing to sacrifice mobility over heavier armour, and also sustained combat.
This version is pretty much a moderate improvement thanks to mobility upgrades, and maybe slightly better armour, but this is an optional piece of equipment for you.

>Any details for this armour is pretty much non-existent aside from armour adjustments and increased ammo capacity."<p>

The suit was put back into its casing before he grabbed another piece of equipment, this time it had no case it was just a carapace of a suit which he had pulled from behind the crate closest to him.

>"And finally the last thing is your new armour, the UCAF had initially held these pieces of armour from full use due to the end of the war, but it was going to be the new armour for the UCAF marines, the armour I have here is the Armalite Industries MK-IX Combat Armour and Webbing, this is a high ballistics armour designed to absorb shock impacts from light explosives and heavy ballistics based weapons fire. It features very little aside from advanced Type-D Iridium plating, and advanced kinetic absorbing system integrated with the plating, pretty much to augment current energy shields with kinetic based protection.
The armour is balanced for all standard marines so it shouldn't be a problem for you to handle the armour. The only problem would be taking fire from a focus carbine, that'd pretty much eat through the armour and shields in seconds."

He dropped the armour onto a nearby helmet case and looked around for anything he might have missed, after a while looking through crates and his data-pad he concluded with.

>"The rest of your gear orientation will have to be done by instructors around the firing range, all those who have been assigned specialised weapons better speak to them now, and those who require assistance in armour use and APU piloting should go to the cargo hold. As for the rest of you, good luck and don't shoot yourselves."<p>

The specialist left the range leaving the marines to methodically begin examining their weapons and gear, Shepard was being assigned with a few new tools, being a higher ranked officer had his perks. Shepard didn't need to go see any of the instructors as he retrieved his own selection of equipment.

He pulled out a ABR from a nearby rack ran the barcode and integrated IFF into his Nova Tool to mark it as his, standard procedure was also to then scratch into the side of the gun the markings of the trooper in question. The ACC wasn't really his sort of weapon and in his experience, ammo may go a long way, but precision doesn't hurt either.

He looked over to where marksmen were busy retrieving and examining their VCI-A9 SMGs, Shepard sought a weapon he could rely on and a VCI didn't sound bad to have around, he picked out a dull black VCI and attachments, he weighed the weapon, light like a CSM but probably a lot more lethal.

The one thing he noticed was the fact that there were no snipers available, well it probably made sense only sniper teams would be allowed to retrieve their own sniper rifles, and mod them in any way they see fit. CQC specialists in the battalion were all gathering for some AA-88s, it seemed to quickly disappear from sight as they waited to grab one.

A lot of troops stuck with the ACC and a few with a mix of range and firepower, a few went about getting explosive charges and anti-tank weapons, while the special weapons teams got their chance to test out the plasma gear. Shepard had a feeling that the mission coming was somehow going to require a careful combination of all elements of the battalion to succeed, and probably himself in the midst of it all.

As he looked over side arms he found a gallery of dozens of types of pistols, he wasn't surprised the UCAF military armed entire strike forces of Helldivers with whatever guns they needed, the Adjutant holding its own Helldivers aboard was the same, it was strange that now that he had access to their arsenal it seemed lacking.

A number of .45cal handguns and hand cannons were in pistol racks and cases, a few incredibly powerful revolvers which were a definite rarity amongst the UCAF military. He was tempted to take a revolver but decided against it, even with augmented armour the revolver ammo was a hard thing to come by and the recoil would have knocked the gun into his face every time he fired.

He went through a few other pistols till he found something interesting, an old looking handgun, it was a .45cal and it seemed fairly good in condition, he read the side of it, CSA-R19 Razorback. It was a 24 round handgun with the earliest ionic ammo clip available at the time, it was likely owned by a helldiver who probably left it inside the racks, or died.

>The pistol in question was a devastating piece of work; it was made from tritainium, an old material used for guns designed for anti-tank work, it was stylised on the side. "He who runs awayâ€|" He flipped it unto the other side. "â€|lives to fight another day." The oldest words of Sun Tzu still recognised in the UCAF military, and apparently a very skilled helldiver.<p>

The pistol sported a under barrel knife emplacement for close combat but also a laser marker and iron sights, it was rather odd to see such an old pistol, but finders keepers. Shepard grinned as he took the handgun and holstered it into his webbing, he'd have a field day getting this pistol polished pristine and ready for whatever mission had been planned.

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Now the one thing Shepard hadn't had time was to get familiar with other faces in his battalion, most of the time he was stuck with one platoon and having 50 faces to remember seemed pretty easy, well trying to recall 1125 wasn't. He hadn't much experience trying to recall all of those who were beside him, even during the attack on Orvis he still couldn't recognise half the faces that were in his battalion.

The good news was that he was being assigned to the 5th company thanks to a certain fact that his former platoon had been nearly wiped out at the battle of Orvis, the reassignment came with strict changes for all the company leaders. Shepard was being moved over to another company due to his skills in urban warfare meaning he was going to become a platoon leader or a squad leader, which wasn't so bad.

In all honesty he regretted that when the time came for his first mission. After spending a good 2 hours getting his gear in order and spending a whole week aboard ship, they were coming upon their staging ground. Captain Faust gathered the leaders of the regiments and forces still aboard the ship; Harris was present with Shepard and 5 other squad leaders of their battalion.

He stood there in the briefing room with his arms behind his back taking a rigid posture in anticipation for this coming briefing, why it had been left unknown till this time was what got Shepard worried more than what he knew. He just hoped Eric was going to be in his force to back him up when things went down the shitter.

As the holographic display of their objective came to life Faust let Admiral Haden explain what they were looking at.

>"Marines, this is our target." A zoomed image of a planet of green and blue, it had plenty of city lights shining from across its surface, they could tell this wasn't a human colony thanks to its glowing name: Oma Ker. "Oma Ker is a heavily inhabited colony probably one of the biggest in our intelligence reports. It's inhabited by nearly half a billion colonists and sports a number of space ports and shipyards. It holds plenty of garrisons of troops and produces weapons, it's also a fair distance from the turian homeworld, but still it would send shockwaves of panic if it was hit directly."
He zoomed in even closer on one particular region.

>"But the main objective is not to attack as directly, we'd be outgunned, outnumbered and outmanned, it'd be a very short assault. Your main objective on this world is to strike in multiple locations, 1 company of your battalion will be mobilised and deployed via stealth class Longswords with FTL drives, and they'll deposit each of your teams at a critical location at the capital of this world Sarlik.
There are a total of 4 space ports in range of the main government buildings making it easier for you to gain the attention of the local inhabitants once things are under way, as for one team,

they shall be sent on a fairly dangerous raid. One team must breach the capital building of the city and make an uplink to the database of the turian hierarchy, all intelligence gathered will help us learn more of their force deployments and industrial worlds as well as planned staging grounds."

It was then one marine inquired.

>"Why doesn't Delilah just hack their network and uplink a backdoor into their database?"<p>

"Well that's the thing, the turians aren't as ignorant to hackers and they've created an offline storage for data transfer making data retrieval a pain in the processor, it'd take a very arduous process of cutting and hacking off data streams so a direct link would be easier." Delilah replied.

"Yes, hence this attack on their capital building, only one team needs to be deployed, and the others will run diversions with attacks on infrastructure and industrial buildings. Once we've retrieved enough of the data we will make an appearance over the city by temporarily cloaking, once we've retrieved all teams we'll make a jump in orbit from the planet. It should give them some pause to future advances on human territory while we're around." Haden finished.

"So who will volunteer?" Faust asked.

Harris answered before any of the squad leaders had a chance.

>"I'll volunteer Sargent Shepard's team for the mission, they've got the best infiltrator in their unit and also Shepard's got a lot to prove."<p>

Shepard threw a looking at Harris who in return gave him a grin. Shepard was going to kick the ass out of the colonel, but he'd still have to blame himself for volunteering for being the colonel's aide. He shut up and felt annoyed, but he accepted it.

>"I'll have my team prepare as soon as possible."<p>

"Good, then its settled, fifth company, first platoon, third squad will be lead in by Sargent Shepard." Faust stated aloud.

Shepard wondered why the fuck the universe wanted to screw him over so badly. But then again this was the UCAF marines, as soon as he enlisted; he knew something was going to kill him.

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Operation: Counterpoint- Underway

Let's see how things turn out for the troops as they begin their first operation behind enemy lines, anyone would like to volunteer any OCs are welcome to do so, and also weapons and vehicles may also be included.

End
file.